

Woolaston Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 12 MARCH 2026 at 8 PM AT WOOLASTON MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs Riches (Chairman), M Greenslade, H Greenslade, Rowlands, Fairless, Brown

IN ATTENDANCE: G Orchard Preece (Clerk), CCllr C McFarling, DCllr A Birch, Ms Aminah Motara and Ms Debbie Jeynes (Severn Trent Water) and 3 members of the public

19/26 Apologies. Apologies were received from Cllr J McElroy.

20/26 Declarations Of Interest. There were none.

21/26 Minutes From the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2026 were not approved as a correct record. The Clerk was requested to amend the sections relating to the report of the Plusterwine meeting on 4 February 2026 (improvements to the 'Triangle' and digestate spreading) and the proposed works on the A48. The amended minutes will be presented for approval at the next meeting.

22/26 Public Open Forum. There were no comments.

23/26 Report from County / District Councillors.

- a. Written reports were received from CCllr McFarling and DCllr Birch before the meeting and circulated to councillors. DCllr Birch reported that all items on his report were approved at the Cabinet meeting.
- b. CCllr McFarling was asked to provide an update on progress with the Forest of Dean's UNESCO Biosphere bid. He explained that work has continued on developing an appropriate governance structure, reflecting the Forest's long-standing traditions of local identity and community decision-making. A key part of the bid is recognising the close relationship between local people and the natural environment and ensuring that cultural heritage is valued alongside biodiversity. Universities have already expressed interest in research partnerships should a biosphere status be achieved. Engagement with local groups, including commoners and freeminers, is ongoing. Some concerns have been raised, including scepticism about climate change and the potential impact on traditional rights. The Chairman noted that some long-standing Foresters are worried about how biosphere status might affect freemining rights. They have expressed concerns that, alongside the Local Plan, the Forest could be "concreted over". DCllr Birch responded that the Local Plan is constrained by the government housing targets which place significant pressure on the District Council. FODDC is seeking to balance growth with the need to protect the Forest's landscape, biodiversity and community character.

24/26 Presentation – Seven Trent Water Flooding Team Representatives (Aminah Motora and Debbie Jeynes)

Representatives from Severn Trent Water (STW) Flooding Team provided a presentation following up from a public meeting on 20 Nov 2025. The team outlined their roles and covered the impact that the new housing development (Old Dairy Way) would have on Woolaston and Alvington's Sewage pumping stations; sewage issues at Brookend; the investigation of sewage escape outside the school and other drainage and flooding matters affecting the parish. A summary report of the presentation is attached to these minutes (Appendix 1)

25/26 Revised Draft Local Plan 2025-2045 - Regulation 18 Consultation.

The Council discussed the Revised Draft Local Plan in detail. Members raised concerns relating to housing numbers, reliance on Beachley Barracks, transport and A48 capacity, cross-border travel issues, infrastructure delivery, health provision, housing mix, and the concentration of recent development in Netherend.

It was noted that the description of the site in Policy RLP106 is incorrect. The land is not to the rear of Homelea but is adjacent to Alan's Cottage and owned by the owner of Alan's Cottage.

Policy RLP109 – Land Adjacent to Severn View Road. The Council discussed concerns about access, road safety, sewerage capacity, the impact on recreational land, and the cumulative effect of recent development in Netherend. It considered that the site is unsuitable for the proposed number of dwelling and suggested an alternative site nearer the A48.

It was agreed that the Clerk would prepare the final written response based on the concerns raised at the meeting and submit it to FODDC. The full submission is attached appended to these minutes (Appendix 2). **Action: Clerk**

26/26 Clerk Report. There were no comments or questions. All items requiring a decision were specified separately on the agenda.

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

27/26 Planning Application

a. [P0221/26/FUL | Erection of a garage outbuilding | Skycroft Woodside Woolaston Lydney GL15 6PA](#)

The council had no objections to the above planning application.

28/26 Planning Applications Received Since The Publication Of The Agenda

a. [P0192/26/FUL –The Reddings, Woolaston Common, Single Storey Side extension](#). Councillors agreed to consider the late at the meeting. It is a modernised version of a previously approved application. There were no objections.

b. [Planning Appeal against the refusal of Planning Application P1500/25/PIP](#). Council noted the recently submitted planning appeal and agreed that no further comments were required. The comments previously submitted to the Planning in Principle were considered sufficient.

29/26 FODDC Planning Decisions Since the Last Meeting

a. P1524/25/FUL, Shalom, Woolaston Grange, removal of condition b (Agricultural occupancy) relating to planning application DF.4907/A to remove the restrictive occupancy condition that is preventing a sale - [Granted permission 12 Feb 2026](#).

b. P0188/25/FUL, Hillside Cottage Woodside, Change of use of the land from an agricultural/equestrian use to a tourism use and the construction of 2 holiday accommodation units, improved vehicular access, parking area and associated works - [Refused 20 Feb 2026](#).

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

30/26 Planning Correspondence

a. Council noted the report from Heidi Bradley at Plusterwine Biogas following the meeting on 4 Feb 2026 with Station Road residents and representatives from Plusterwine.

The Chairman resumed the Chair of the PC Meeting.

31/26 Standing Items

a. Policing Issues

i. The council noted the crime statistics accessed via the national UK link. ([Lydney | Police.uk](#) [www.police.uk](#)). It was noted that the statistics are not up to date – it was reported by the PCSO at the last meeting that the system is not up to date

ii. There have been incidents of suspected drug-related activity on the playing fields – the Clerk will contact the PCSO. **Action: Clerk**

iii. The clerk has received an email from the Forest Advocacy Scheme. She will forward the details to Cllr Rowlands.

b. Highways and Footpaths

i. Council noted the new potholes on the A48 were filled on 12 Mar 26 (the day of the meeting).

ii. Council noted growing concern following notification of the proposed signing and lining works on the A48 scheduled from 16 – 28 Mar 26. Residents are unable to plan movements in and out of their homes, as the starting point, timings of the work, and the diversion route have not been clarified.

iii. The PROW officer report has been received. It was agreed to write to thank him for the in-depth report.

- c. Maintenance
- i. Cllr Fairless has received the replacement dog bin for the broken one on Birchwood Road. A further report has been received of a damaged dog bin on the playing field. The Chairman will investigate and determine whether it can be repaired, or if not, whether it should be removed as there are already two on the field. Removal would also avoid the ongoing cost of emptying it. **Action: Chairman**
 - ii. The council confirmed agreed that all areas listed in the Grass Cutting contract specification (including one cut of the Community Orchard) are to be completed by Monmouthshire County Council. The timing is to be agreed. The clerk will prepare the Contact and forward for signature. **Action: Clerk**
- d. Churchyard and Cemetery
- i. The Cemetery Working Group has made further changes to the rules. The Chairman will forward the revised version to the clerk for amendment, and to be returned to the Working Group for checking with the updated rules to be presented at the next Parish Council meeting. **Action: Clerk**
 - ii. The trees for the Churchyard have been ordered and will be delivered to Cllr Fairless.. Council will liaise with the churchwarden and M Harris of TrunkArb to confirm the position for planting. This item will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. **Action: Clerk/ Cllr Fairless**
- e. Governance Documents
- i. The Information Technology, Email and Digital Communications Policy was reviewed and councillors resolved to re-adopt it.
 - ii. Volunteer Working Party Policy. The Chairman raised further questions regarding Safeguarding provisions within the policy, specifically the reference to an "incident reporting system", which she believes may not currently exist. The clerk was asked to check and clarify the position. **Action: Clerk**
 - iii. Safeguarding Policy The Chairman raised several questions, including clarification of the requirement to "maintain safe facilities" and how this is achieved. She also considered that the policy should make explicit who safeguarding concerns should be reported to and that concerns should not be discussed with the individual affected. The Chairman and Clerk will meet separately to review and clarify these points. **Action: Chairman/Clerk**

32/26 Financial Matters

- a. Financial Report.
- i. The council received the financial report, approved the bank reconciliation and noted the balance of accounts as at 28 Feb 2026 (Current account - £774.36 / Deposit account - £18,281.68).
 - ii. Council approved the payment of accounts for Mar 2026 in accordance with the Financial Report and noted receipts and payments since the last meeting which were made under delegated authority.
- Council also approved the continued purchase of a licence for the Green Bin at the Cemetery for £70
- b. Council approved the end of year virements of funds in Reserves from unallocated working capital to increase the earmarked reserves in line with 2025/2026 budget setting. The following was agreed:

Item	Budgeted allocation	Proposed allocation	Reason
Tree Maintenance	£1,000	£2,000	£528 spent this year; additional funds needed to build reserve for tree survey and any resulting works.
Parish Grounds Maintenance	£500	£2,000	No spend this year; allocation transferred plus an additional amount to cover unexpected maintenance requirements.
Defibrillator*	£100	£200	No spend this year; allocation transferred plus an additional amount to build reserve for future unit replacement.
Office Equipment	£50	£200	No spend this year; allocation transferred plus an increased amount to build reserve for future equipment needs.
Election Costs	£200	£500	Allocation transferred, plus additional amount to maintain reserve for future election expenses – next election 2027
TOTAL	£1,850	£4,900	

Action: Clerk

- c. Councillors confirmed they have read and understood the parish council policies relevant to the Internal/ External Audit Assertion 10 requirements (Data protection, Information Technology, Email and Digital Communications Policy, Website Accessibility Statement and the Publication Scheme., and to note this information will serve as an interim measure. The clerk will contact Cllr McElroy for her confirmation.

33/26 Correspondence

a. Council noted the requirement of the response for Gloucestershire's' Local Government Reorganisation consultation by 26 Mar 26. As further information has been received recently, councillors felt they needed time to review all the documents in order to make an informed response.

Councillors discussed concerns about the proposals, including:

- the lack of clarity around the “spoke” model and neighbourhood groupings
- the difficulty of establishing effective partnerships within clusters where parish priorities differ
- the need to ensure that smaller parishes’ voices are not lost within larger groupings
- the importance of transparency and clarity about how parish representation would work in the future structure

It was agreed that councillors would meet virtually to discuss the consultation documents separately. Individual responses from councillors were also encouraged. A date for a Zoom meeting will be arranged so that a collective Parish Council response can be prepared ahead of the deadline. **Action: Clerk**

34/26 Other Matters

a. Woolaston Friendship Group. Cllr H Greenslade reported that she had contacted local groups asking for volunteers but there were no responses were received. A Facebook post has also been added with no comments to date. There were concerns that the group may not be established. It was suggested that the matter could also be raised at the APM.

b. Purchase of Community Bench. Cllr Fairless reported the cost of the chosen bench has increased to £499. With fixing kit and delivery, the total cost will be £699 (exc VAT). It was agreed to use 300mm extended feet to bury the bench rather than installing a concrete slab as this is more environmentally friendly. It was also agreed to source a plaque separately. Cllr Fairless will arrange the purchase and delivery to the Chairman. **Action: Cllr Fairless**

c. CPR training session. Although attendance was low, the session with Mark Powell from SARA was successful. He confirmed he is willing to provide further training sessions for other groups as required. Donations on the night totalled £50, and the clerk will forward a additional £50 donation as previously agreed. It was noted that the group most at risk did not attend. **Action: Clerk**

d. Parish Defibrillator. It was noted that it is now eight years old and typically has a lifespan of around ten years. Cllr H Greenslade will investigate a service contract for the next two years with a view to including replacement costs in the 2028 budget.

e. Trustee to the Poors Land Charity. The term of office has expired although the current trustee, David Harris, agreed to continue in the role. This was proposed by Cllr Brown and seconded by Cllr Fairless. The Clerk will inform him. **Action: Clerk**

f. GRCC Village of the Year competition It was agreed that due to the amount of work involved, the council will not enter the competition but will reconsider participation in 2027.

35/26 Risk Assessment. There were no new additions or updates to the Risk Assessment.

36/26 Councillors Reports/ Items For The Next Agenda

There were no reports and no additional items raised, other than those already agreed earlier in the meeting.

37/26 Next Meetings

a. Full Parish Council Meeting – Thursday 9 April 2026 at 8 pm

b. Annual Parish Meeting - Thursday 23 April 2026. The Clerk has advertised the meeting and is inviting local groups and organisations to attend.

The meeting closed at 10pm

Signed: Date:

Appendices:

Appendix A – Severn Trent Water Presentation Summary.

Appendix B – Local Plan Submission (Parish Council Response).