

## Minutes of Haresfield Parish Council Meeting

**Held in the Village Hall on Tuesday January 28th 2025**

**Present:** Councillors Alan White, Ursula Jeakins, John Hunt, County councillor Stephen Davis, District councillors Mark Ryder and Demelza Turner-Wilkes

Clerk: Madeleine King e-mail: [haresfieldpc@gmail.com](mailto:haresfieldpc@gmail.com)

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**Appoint Chair:** Councillor Alan White took the chair

**Public Participation:** Charlotte Tilsley, Fiona Bevan, Jenny Knight.

**Apologies:** Cllr Nicky Ford

**Declaration of Interests /Dispensations:** none

### **County Councillors and District Councillor's Reports:**

Cllr Davis reported:

- The government have mandated in a White Paper on devolution, that district councils should come together (i.e. be abolished) to form a unitary authority. Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has applied to start this process in March 2025, which would mean confirmation of the arrangement in autumn, and elections for the new authority in May 2026. There are options for the process to be delayed by Cllr Davis explained that the reorganisation creates a lot of uncertainty for people's jobs, and he considers that it is in their interest to have early clarity on the future situation. It is likely that there will also be a grouping of the unitary authorities with a regional mayor. More information will be available in the months to come.
- GCC and SDC are almost unique among neighbouring councils in being financially solvent and will spend more on services this year than last year. Highways, potholes and adult social care will receive extra funding. Special Educational Needs will have more funding, with additional much-needed educational psychologists.
- Winter preparations are in hand, gritting provision in place. There is good technology in this area, and Cllr Davis reminded that the teams who do the pothole repair are the same as the people doing the gritting, and they work very hard with a hefty workload – which is much appreciated.
- Potholes: Cllr Davis reminds that using **fixmystreet.com** is the quickest way to report potholes and that this process leads to the quickest response to the problems.

District Councillor Mark Ryder reported:

- Expansion of refuse collections to include batteries and vapes commences this spring. Looking at further opportunities later in the year, maybe to include small electricals.

- Cllr Ryder's recommendations that parish and town councils be involved with developers at an early stage in the proposed management of open spaces and amenities on new developments have been approved, and further work is planned.
- Unitary Authority discussions – Cllr Ryder pointed out that there will be a huge reduction in the number of councillors when this goes ahead. However, there should be benefits for funding: it will enable housing allocation to be grouped together in other places – bigger scale allows for different solutions to housing.
- Brimscombe Port Development – Council voted to purchase commercial units on the new development to support delivery of the scheme and have a controlling interest in potential occupiers.
- Garden Centre, previously Dobbies, to re-open on 28th February 2025
- Market Towns Vitality Fund update: Ten projects have been awarded funds:

- a. Berkeley – hiring of Christmas lights and installation
- b. Cam – purchase of Christmas lights
- c. Stroud & District Chamber of Commerce – Enjoy Stroud District flyer printing & distribution
- d. Dursley – Christmas light display upgrade
- e. Minchinhampton – noticeboard with map
- f. Nailsworth – creation and promotion of Nailsworth textile trail
- g. Stroud – installation of display boards to show town maps and tourism information
- h. Stroud – purchase of projector for year-round external events
- i. Wotton – festive lights and wall fixings
- j. Wotton – foldable external display boards

£55k remains unallocated which will be rolled forward to support initiatives on high street vitality prioritised in the Council plan.

- Collection of additional recyclables at kerbside: Approval has been given to proposal to collect used vapes and batteries at the kerbside, commencing in the New Year. This will reduce the amount of vapes and batteries put into general rubbish and reduce potential fires. The collections will be made with food waste collection.

District Councillor Demelza Turner-Wilkes reported:

- Hunts Grove: Stroud District Council have written to the developers with a list of the breaches of their contract and a response is awaited. Hunts Grove residents are regularly in touch with Cllr Ryder and Cllr Turner-Wilkes regarding these matters.
- A plan has gone in for the additional 620 houses on Harefield Lane. The situation remains the same: this is not likely to move forward early in the year, because of all the other matters relating to highways. County Cllr Davis has raised the importance of the lack of road access into Hunts Grove and requested that this be considered in their response to the planning application for the further development. Currently the planning application

does not mention A38 at all, and there are already traffic blockages for residents leaving Hunts Grove which is also a safety issue. A38 initial plans should have been added during Phase 1, 12 years ago. Haresfield Lane cannot be re-opened as things stand, Councillor advises this would further hamper road traffic in Hunts Grove and potentially create more blockages. Contractors for the new road junction, off the A38, have been appointed and work is starting. This is likely to take at least a year, partly due to archaeological works. SDC have a meeting with the developer, Crest, scheduled for early February.

- A community centre for Hunts Grove is still under discussion and may go ahead in a reduced form.
- A second primary school was planned, but this is not needed as there are still places available at Hunts Grove primary school. However there is a need for a local secondary school as Severn Vale is always oversubscribed and some Hunts Grove pupils are being sent as far as Newent.
- Cllr Hunt enquired about the previously reported drug-related problems in Hunts Grove. This has been the subject of a police campaign and although it has now moved out of the centre of the development, is still an ongoing area of concern and under surveillance.

### ***Matters arising:***

***Village maintenance:*** The Great British litter pick is taking place in March, Haresfield to participate. Cllr Turner-Wilkes has been in touch with the SDC neighbourhood warden regarding parking problems in Haresfield, previously reported to her. There has been a change in warden so this has not yet been actioned. The Community Warden, Mark Dodd, is to be approached.

***Village Hall:*** A digger and driver have been booked to excavate the necessary ditch to erect the noticeboard, weather permitting.

***Energy from Waste & CLG:*** Clerk attends the grant committee and due to various factors, it was noted that there will be a good funding allocation for the 2025 applications, meaning that applications are worth submitting!

***Highways, traffic and parking:*** Concern is high about flooding coming down Beacon Lane as not all ditches are being maintained adequately. Charlotte Tilsley, Fiona Bevan and Jenny Knight reported that drains are blocked and water is flowing down the road into the village, especially affecting houses that are at the bottom of the lane and those properties nearest the Beacon inn (on the opposite side of the road.) The question was asked about whether additional drains are needed. Additionally, it was noted that a pipe has been put in place in at the bottom end of Beacon Lane which appears to be diverting excess water from the ditch onto the highway. Lots of loose stone and other deposits are also coming down the lane. Clerk has emailed the SDC flood risk management team requesting advice on flooding risk management and mitigation, and is awaiting a response. Cllr Davis has offered to take this up with the highways officer if required.

***Biodiversity:*** The Haresfield 2025 calendar, produced by Rich Gibbs, raised the fabulous sum of £131, which will fund the purchase of a barn owl box. Councillors thanked Rich for his efforts.

Meeting took place with local National Trust reps regarding hedges as minuted under Merryfield Trustees. The NT advised that the wildlife corridor would benefit local wildlife and followed up with an email stating the same. Unfortunately, they are not able to offer any tangible assistance in either obtaining trees or assistance with planting. They were able to signpost to organisations currently offering small whip trees. Consideration to be given to these offers.

**Footpaths/ bins:** Clerk reminded Gary Wilson, Highways manager about the promised replacement grit bin up Beacon Lane, following the crushing of the previous bin by a Highways Lorry.

**Merryfield trustees:** Fiona Bevan reported an ongoing increase in cars and people using the Merryfields, and a large rise in dog waste being left on the field. This is a concern as it can lead to the spread of Giardia, a disease which can be passed on through dog waste. It is also a major concern for the school children using the field.

Merryfield trustees also informed the parish council that they are erecting a sign to inform Merryfield users that the field is private land intended for the use of Haresfield residents, Haresfield school and Haresfield cricket club. A footpath sign has been installed by the Cotswold wardens to direct users across the field across the public right of way.

Clerk and Jenny Knight, together with Rich Gibbs, met National Trust representatives about renewing the hedge at the back of the Merryfield, in line with the objective of the creation of 'wildlife corridors'. Mr Haywood has approved this and has contributed some funding. A watering system will be installed for this, running along the back of the field. The community Payback team have strimmed back the brambles along the western boundary.

There is a proposal to renew the planting with mature young trees in the orchard. If permission for this is granted, an application could be made for new trees for the UBB community fund.

#### **Road closures:**

**Website:** .gov domain is now live and the new parish council website is: [haresfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://haresfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk) Clerk to update website and inform organisations as necessary. However, the admin function of the new website is currently not functional and clerk has contacted the website provider for assistance.

**Planning:** Councillors objected to Application Number: S.24/2201/FUL Location: Land at Gloucester 12, Halpern Way, Haresfield, Gloucestershire. Application Type: Full Planning Application Description: 3no. Flexible industrial units (Use Class B2, B8, and/or E(g)(iii)) with ancillary office space and associated works including landscaping, boundary treatments, parking and service yard. The objection was made on two grounds: First, the height of the proposed storage unit at 24m contravenes the current extent permissions which refer to the height of the garden centre building as a base line. Additionally, the motorway junction is not sufficient to accommodate the additional traffic that the site will produce.

#### **Correspondence:**

- An email was received from Mr Roger Cowburn regarding flooding in the village. Mr Cowburn informed the pc that he has contacted Stroud District Council with a complaint regarding the water and mud spilling onto the road due to a resident's blocked pipe. Jenny Knight confirmed that this has been cleared and it was discovered that the drain was blocked by old builders' debris.
- Correspondence received from Mr O'Bryan regarding ongoing closure of Haresfield Lane. As previously reported, the pc has been advised verbally that a closure order for this road has been renewed, however no formal notification of this has been received. Cllr Ryder reported that frustration with the ongoing closure of this road is shared by many people, including the residents of Hunts Grove. Although the road should have re-opened to pedestrians and cyclist, and Cllr Ryder has raised it with SDC, the SDC planning authority decided not to take any action with the developers with this at the moment - there are so many other issues currently under investigation with the developers. Clerk to contact the GCC roadspace co-ordinators for information.
- Valuation Office Agency form completed and acknowledged.
- David Dodsworth has raised the issue of the untidy Network Rail crossing. Clerk is in a lengthy email correspondence with the NR community team regarding this and has taken the matter to the next stage.

**Finance & Clerks Report:** The parish council banks with the Co-operative bank, we have been notified that the Coventry has taken over its banking with immediate effect. Bank reconciliation presented to Nov end. Precept request submitted.

***Transactions/payments agreed:***

*Cheque payments were agreed and authorised by councillors.*

**Any other business:**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.22pm

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Annual Parish Meeting March 25<sup>th</sup>.**