

Minutes of the Works Committee Meeting held on
Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 6.00 p.m. at the Parish Centre, Gerald's Way
in accordance with notice given

In the Chair: Cllr Samaroo

Present: Cllrs Funnell, Golding, Humberstone, Oakley, D Taylor and L Taylor

In attendance: Clerk, Chris Attwood

Cllr Samaroo welcomed everyone back after the summer break. She reminded members to raise their hand before speaking and asked them to ensure that mobile phones are switched off or to silent.

W.01.09.25 Apologies – Cllrs Gardiner and Woodfine

W.02.09.25 Declarations of interest – None

W.03.09.25 Public participation – None

W.04.09.25 Minutes of last meeting – Cllr Oakley proposed “**acceptance of the minutes of 16th July 2025**” This was seconded by Cllr Humberstone and unanimously agreed.

W.05.09.25 Clerk's Report

ChalCAN Tree Planting – At the July meeting, approval was given for the planting of two hornbeams to replace two failed trees. Since then, a member of ChalCAN has advised that, following further research and advice, the Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus Torminalis*) would be a more suitable replacement. Members were content with this change.

Grass Cutting Review – The Working Group agreed to meet on 21st October at 11.15am. The Clerk advised that Cllr Woodfine will be joining the working group.

Assistant Groundman Recruitment – The Clerk confirmed that the Assistant Groundsman had finished working for the Council and that recruitment for a new Assistant will begin in the new year. In the meantime, contract labour has been arranged to provide cover. The Clerk noted that this was a significant loss to the Council. Cllr Samaroo expressed her support for recruiting a new Assistant, highlighting that it had taken considerable time to secure agreement for the post, and that having a second permanent member of staff was beneficial both to the Senior Groundsman and to the Council.

Bus Shelter Refurbishment – The Clerk explained that further information was required before the matter could be brought back to the Committee for consideration. She advised that, due to limited funds, with only £500 remaining in the bus shelter budget, any refurbishment would need to be carried out in-house to make this feasible. If the work is to be undertaken within the current financial year, external grant funding will need to be sourced. Alternatively, if the refurbishment is deferred until the next financial year, grant applications can be made in advance, and the project can be considered as part of next year's budget planning under agenda item 9. The Clerk will continue to make further investigations and will bring the matter to the October meeting. **ACTION: Clerk**

W.06.09.25 Works Budget – The RFO provided a report, there were no questions. However, Cllr Oakley explained that he had noticed that the allotments cost code was skewing the works budget figures as this budget is managed by the Charity Committee not the works committee. He informed members that there had been a lengthy discussion about this at the Finance and Management Committee meeting earlier that day, and it had been agreed that the RFO would move the allotments cost code into a new cost centre to ensure that it is no longer included within the Works Committee

budget figures. This figure is purely to note the anticipated income from the Charity; in future this will therefore be discussed by the Finance and Management Committee annually when considering the precept requirement.

Cllr Samaroo suggested bringing agenda item 9 to this stage of the meeting, everyone agreed.

W.09.09.25 Precept – Cllr Samaroo explained that the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) would usually provide a draft precept document following initial discussions by the Finance & Management (F&M) Committee. However, as the Works Committee met earlier than usual and the F&M Committee only met today, the draft could not be prepared in advance. The Clerk confirmed the RFO will produce the draft precept document next month to support budget discussions.

The Clerk reported an expected overspend in the tree budget due to works recommended in the annual tree inspections (to be discussed under *agenda item 8*) and due to work required on a Lime tree at France Lynch Pleasure Ground (*agenda item 7*) therefore consideration should be given to increasing this budget next year. As discussed, if three bus shelter are to be refurbished, the bus shelter budget may need to be increased even if grant funding can be sourced. This matter will be discussed at the October meeting when more detailed information will be available to support a better-informed decision.

W.07.09.25 Correspondence – Lime Tree: France Lynch Pleasure Ground – At the Full Council meeting on 4th September, the Clerk advised members that she had received a letter from a resident expressing concerns about a Lime tree in France Lynch Pleasure Ground (FLPG). Although the tree had been inspected by the Council's tree surgeon, the resident was not reassured with the recommendations. The Clerk confirmed that a site meeting is scheduled for 11th September with the resident, Cllrs Oakley, Gardiner, Woodfine, Chris Attwood, and the SDC Tree Officer; the Clerk will also be in attendance. A decision on the tree's management has therefore been deferred until the October meeting, when more information will be available. However, she noted that significant expenditure is likely, and this should be considered during precept discussions.

W.08.09.25 Trees - Members were furnished with a copy of the annual tree reports and quote prior to meeting.

a) To consider the annual tree report – Following a brief discussion Cllr Oakley proposed “**we instruct Sam Kelly to carry out the work as recommended within his annual tree report at a cost of £1030.00**” This was seconded by Cllr Samaroo and unanimously agreed. **ACTION: Clerk**

b) To consider the quote for tree work at Marle Hill Bank – Cllr Humberstone proposed “**we instruct Sam Kelly to carry out the work to the trees on Marle Hill Bank as recommended in his quote**” This was seconded by Cllr Golding. There was one abstention. **ACTION: Clerk**

c) To review the Tree Management Policy – Along with meeting papers, members were issued with a copy of the current Tree Policy, which was last reviewed in September 2024. The Clerk noted that the trees at Marle Hill Bank need to be added to the policy, as they are not currently included. She also highlighted several points within the document that she felt required further consideration.

Members discussed whether it is appropriate for Councillors to carry out informal inspections of trees, as outlined in sections 1.4, 1.5, 2.2b, and 4.2 of the policy. It was agreed that Councillors should not be expected to undertake inspections.

Cllr Oakley suggested the following amendments: Section 4.2 be amended to refer to “any potential problems” rather than “any problems”. The first sentence in the final paragraph of the policy should be revised to read: “may be exacerbated” instead of “will be exacerbated”.

It was agreed that the Clerk will re-draft the policy to incorporate these amendments and bring it back to the October meeting for approval. **ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr L Taylor advised that there is a tree on the Brantwood roadside of the pleasure ground that looks sick and should be looked at. Chris Attwood will do this. **ACTION: Chris Attwood**

W.10.09.25 Allotments – The Assistant Clerk requested that the Committee consider purchasing a new allotment software package. She provided a note to members explaining that the current software was still causing a significant number of problems despite two years of trying to resolve them. Having compared three providers, she recommended that we proceed with Scribe. This is who the PC use for their accounting package. The Clerk confirmed that Scribe's customer service is great, and having liaised with other Clerks, Scribe comes highly recommended. Cllr L Taylor suggested going back to the manual system. The Clerk confirmed that this is an option, but that to save time in administering the allotments a software package would be preferred. Following a brief discussion Cllr Golding proposed **"we request the Finance and Management Committee to consider purchasing the Scribe allotment software package"** This was seconded by Cllr D Taylor. There was one abstention. **ACTION: Assistant Clerk/RFO**

W.11.09.25 Footpath Group Report – Cllr Oakley reported that he has taken the decision to step back from his current role leading the FWG. He explained that a lot of work has been achieved by the group since they started in 2017 and there were no obvious big tasks left to complete. Cllr Oakley advised members that he has arranged to meet with the other volunteers on Thursday 11th September to discuss the most appropriate way forward for the FWG.

Cllr Samaroo led members in thanking Cllr Oakley for his dedication and the valuable contribution he has made to the group since its inception.

W.12.09.25 Chris Attwood's report – A copy of Chris Attwood's report was circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting.

Cllr D Taylor asked Chris Attwood how many sandbags he had in stock; Chris confirmed that he has approximately 50.

W.13.09.25 Ward Matters

Cllr Oakley would like to see the road sweeper in Bussage again as the roadside weeds along the Ridgeway are bad. The Clerk confirmed that this had been mentioned to the Local Highways Manager and that, although unlikely, she would request this again.

Cllr L Taylor raised concern with the uncut area of land on the Ridgeway. The Clerk clarified that this area of land is managed by Stroud District Council not the PC, and that the current cutting regime was agreed two years ago when reviewing the grass cutting regime. This area is cut once a year in the Autumn.

Cllr D Taylor raised a question regarding winter conditions and how best to manage different weather-related challenges. The Clerk confirmed that she will circulate a copy of the Adverse Weather Action Plan, which was updated last year and includes all relevant contact numbers.

Cllr Samaroo highlighted that there are several benches within the France Lynch Pleasure Ground that need some attention as the metal is flaking, and they need painting. She also noted that a wooden post has a hole in it this needs to be checked. Chris Attwood will look at both matters.

ACTION: Chris Attwood.

W.14.09.25 Any Other Matters - There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.20pm.