

Minutes of the Works Committee Meeting held on
Wednesday 15th April 2026 at 6.00 p.m. at the Parish Centre, Gerald's Way
in accordance with notice given

In the Chair: Cllr Samaroo

Present: Cllrs Gardiner, Golding, Humberstone, Oakley, D Taylor and L Taylor, Woodfine

In attendance: Clerk, Chris Attwood

W.01.04.26 Apologies – None

W.02.04.26 Declarations of interest – None

W.03.04.26 Public participation – None

W.04.04.26 Minutes of last meeting – Cllr Golding proposed “**acceptance of the minutes of 15th March 2026**” This was seconded by Cllr Oakley. There were two abstentions.

W.05.04.26 Clerk's Report – The Clerk provided some updates:

France Lynch Pleasure Ground (FLPG) – The Lime tree in France Lynch Pleasure Ground was felled last week.

Toddlers Multi-Play Unit at FLPG - Chris Attwood has spoken with Valley Forge about the piece of play equipment at FLPG which was flagged as a moderate risk in the annual play inspection report. Valley Forge can carry out the necessary welding work and Chris can replace the wooden slats. Valley Forge will provide a formal quote but as the expenditure is expected to be under £500.00 this can be purchased by the RFO.

Bussage Pleasure Ground - The seasonal issue of graffiti has reoccurred at the skate ramps, with two large pieces of graffiti covering one of the Parish Council signs and parts of the ramps. Chris Attwood has cleaned the sign; however, removing graffiti from the concrete ramps is considerably more difficult and time-consuming. The Clerk reported that the Assistant Clerk had contacted Stroud Town Council to ask whether they could recommend a contractor for graffiti removal. Stroud Town Council advised that they take a different approach and permit graffiti on their skate ramps, noting that blank surfaces can attract graffiti. Cllr Woodfine queried what options had previously been explored. Cllr Samaroo explained that a number of approaches had been considered in the past including allowing the skate ramps to be graffitied, but that this was considered out of keeping with the area and therefore not pursued. She explained that if the Parish Council were to consider allowing graffiti on the ramps, this would require consultation with residents in the surrounding area. The Clerk explained that she liaises closely with Frith Youth Centre, which engages with young people regarding graffiti issues. It was agreed that further consideration is required if a longer-term solution is to be identified. The Clerk was therefore asked to bring this matter back to a future agenda once further information has been gathered to inform discussion. CCTV was also discussed, although it was noted that there had been difficulties with this approach in the past, the Clerk will investigate. **ACTION: Clerk**

W.06.04.26 Correspondence – The Clerk reported that an email had been received regarding an alleged incident of anti-social behaviour at the Brownhill allotment site. The complainant advised that the matter had been reported to the police and stated that similar incidents had occurred on more than one occasion. Cllr Woodfine advised that the Council has a duty of care and that the matter raised safeguarding concerns.

It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the tenant concerned requesting that they contact her to discuss their version of events, and to reiterate the allotment rules and guidelines regarding tenants' behaviour whilst on the allotment site. **ACTION: Clerk**

W.07.04.26 Works Budget – There were no questions.

W.08.04.26 Frithwood Cemetery

a) to consider a complaint – In preparation for this agenda item, the Clerk had circulated all correspondence, including photographs submitted by a resident. Information had also been gathered from the Parish Groundsman, and discussions had taken place with the grave diggers. All information was included within the meeting papers for Members' consideration. Cllr D Taylor commented that he felt all reasonable steps had been taken by Parish Council staff and thanked them for their efforts. Members agreed and were satisfied that the actions taken were in line with normal cemetery maintenance practices and had been carried out with the intention of maintaining safety and dignity across the site. Cllr Gardiner suggested that the Clerk obtain a statement from the grave diggers to include within the report, and that the grave diggers' offer to speak directly with, or meet with, the resident to discuss their concerns should be reiterated. Cllr Samaroo proposed **“the Clerk draft the investigation report as requested by the complainant, to include that the Committee has carefully considered the situation and is satisfied that everything possible has been done in line with cemetery procedures, and to include a statement from the grave diggers”** This was seconded by Cllr Humberstone. There was one abstention. The Clerk will draft the report and circulate to Cllrs Humberstone, Oakley and Samaroo prior to responding to the complaint. **ACTION: Clerk**

b) to review cemetery charges – The Clerk had gathered comparative information on cemetery charges from neighbouring parish councils. As is always the case, it was noted that direct comparisons are difficult due to differences in charging structures and services provided. Cllr D Taylor commented that the Parish Council's current charging structure is fair. Following a brief discussion, Members agreed to a modest increase across cemetery fees. Cllr Gardiner proposed **“we raise the cost of charges over £100 by £10 and below £100 by £5”** This was seconded by Cllr Humberstone and unanimously agreed. **ACTION: Clerk**

W.09.04.26 Band Hut Rent Review - The band hut rent is reviewed every five years and is due for review this year. The Committee's recommendation will be taken to the Charity Committee for consideration. The option of charging Chalford Band a peppercorn rent has been raised in the past. In readiness for this discussion, the Assistant Clerk had spoken with the Charity Commission who confirmed that unless otherwise stated within the charity's Governing Document or lease agreement, the Trustee can set the rent at whatever amount they would like, as long as it doesn't go above the annual rate of inflation. Cllr Humberstone suggested charging a peppercorn rent of £10 per annum. Cllr Woodfine queried whether there was any historical context for the current level of rent. The Clerk gave Cllr Woodfine a copy of the current lease agreement. Cllr Woodfine noted that Chalford Band's accounts seemed quite healthy, and he questioned the loss to charity income, although he felt it important to support a community asset such as Chalford Band. A lengthy conversation took place. The Clerk noted that the PC were awarding the band with a grant of £500.00 this year (increased from £250.00). Cllr L Taylor strongly felt that Chalford Band should be supported and that a nominal amount of rent should be charged. Following a very lengthy discussion, Cllr Gardiner proposed **“we recommend to the Charity Committee that we reduce the annual rent to £10.00 to be reviewed every five years”** This was seconded by Cllr Oakley. There was one abstention. **ACTION: Clerk**

W.10.04.26 France Lynch Allotment Site Green Waste Pile – The Clerks had received several concerns in recent weeks from tenants at the France Lynch Allotment Site regarding the increasing size of the green waste pile, with tenants noting that the accumulation has only developed in recent years. Chris Attwood has been monitoring the situation and confirmed that the pile had grown significantly and was not composed solely of allotment-related waste. Cllr Samaroo visited the site and was surprised by the extent of the accumulation, agreeing that action was required. The Clerk

confirmed that France Lynch is the only allotment site with a designated green waste pile, and that this has accumulated over time rather than being formally established as a managed facility. It was noted that tenants at other our other sites use composters which are located on their individual plots. The Clerk had obtained quotations for removal of the green waste pile, which were circulated with the meeting papers for Members' consideration. It was agreed to proceed with the quotation from Attwood Grounds Maintenance to remove the green waste pile in its entirety. Cllr Gardiner proposed **“the whole green waste pile at the France Lynch Allotment Site be removed”** This was seconded by Cllr D Taylor. There was one abstention. Cllr Gardiner further suggested that the matter be referred to the Climate and Nature Working Group to consider how the area could be managed in the future to enhance biodiversity and to prevent recurrence of fly-tipping and unnecessary ongoing costs to the charity. **ACTION: Clerk/Cllr Woodfine**

W.11.04.26 Charity Land – Review of the Exceptional Use of Chalford Pleasure Grounds and Related Charging Guidance Document. - At the last meeting the Committee agreed for a coffee vendor to trade from BPG subject to a three-week free trial period so that they could test to see if this was viable. Cllr Oakley suggested that the document was reviewed to ensure consistency. A copy of the current guidance document was circulated with meeting papers for members consideration. Cllr Oakley proposed that a sentence is added to the end of the existing document **“in some circumstances (such as the starting of attendance at a regular event) the Parish Council may offer a free trial period at its sole discretion”** This was seconded by Cllr Golding and unanimously agreed. **ACTION: Clerk**

W.12.04.26 Frith Wood Paths – Cllr Oakley had drafted a proposal to resurface footpath MCH135 within the parish-owned section of Frith Wood, with the intention of providing year-round accessibility within the wood. This matter was discussed at a meeting attended by Cllrs Oakley and Samaroo, Friends of Frith Wood, and the Clerk where it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Officer to discuss the feasibility of the project and appropriate surfacing materials to improve accessibility. Following further discussions and meetings, the scope of the project developed to include the main route through the wood across the Robert Hitchins-owned section of the wood to the Ashley Drive entrance. In addition, the proposed new path at Bussage Pleasure Ground, intended to provide an accessible route to the new play equipment area, will also be included within the project. It was noted that the works would be delivered at no cost to the Parish Council, as they will be grant funded and undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council PRoW. Members agreed that the project represents a positive improvement to ensure year-round access to the wood and to provide a long-term solution to issues with wet and muddy paths. Cllr Gardiner expressed support for any measures that improve accessibility. Cllr Humberstone proposed **“the Committee approves the project to resurface footpath MCH135 in the parish-owned section of Frith Wood and to install the new path at Bussage Pleasure Ground”** This was seconded by Cllr Samaroo and unanimously agreed. The Clerk was asked to notify Robert Hitchins Ltd of the project and to facilitate contact between them and the PRoW Officer so that direct liaison can take place. **ACTION: Clerk**

W.13.04.26 Footpath Working Group – A report was included with meeting papers. There were no questions, and the great work that the group are carrying out was noted.

W.14.04.26 Chris Attwood's report – A copy of Chris Attwood's report was circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting.

Cllr Samaroo asked if he could define which benches he has painted within his report. Chris confirmed that the Deputy Clerk is aware as she is keeping a record, but he will add this detail to his report.

It was noted that Stroud District Council have started grass cutting.

W.15.03.26 Ward Matters –

Cllr Oakley advised that there is a grit bin on the path from Lypiatt View to The Ridge with a broken lid. Chris Attwood will have a look.

Cllr L Taylor advised that the tree he reported that was growing from a Highways verge has not yet been removed. The Clerk advised that this was reported to Highways.

Cllr L Taylor noted that there is a post halfway down the band hut track and that when the green waste pile from the France Lynch allotment site is collected the lorry must stick to the track.

Cllr Samaroo queried whether the building material has been removed from the conservation verge near to Parish Bank. Chris Attwood confirmed that it has been removed and he will inspect the ground.

Cllr Samaroo encouraged members to attend the public meeting re the Valley Playing Field if they are available.

W.16.04.26 Any Other Matters – Due to the Annual Meeting of the Parish and Annual Meeting of the Council being held on Wednesday 20th May, the next Committee meeting will need to be moved. It was agreed to meet on Thursday 21st May at 6pm.

Cllr Samaroo thanked everyone for their contribution. There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 7:45pm.