

North Nibley Parish Council Meeting - Minutes

Recorded by: Clerk

Date: 2nd October 2024

Meeting Commenced: 19:30

Meeting ended: 21:30

Present:

Parish Councillors:	Lisa Carr (Chairperson) James Smith (Vice-Chairperson) Liesl Smith George Harper Roland Brown Deborah Artingstall
District Councillors:	Catherine Braun, Gareth Kitchen
County Councillor:	
Clerk:	Minutes taken by Councillor James Smith in Clerk's Absence
Other:	One member of the public

Agenda Items

1. To receive and accept any apologies for absence
Councillor Cohen was unable to attend.

2. To invite and receive any declarations of interest
There were none

3. Meeting for public discussion and questions

Member of the public raised concerns regarding speeding vehicles through the village. They highlighted that, whilst cutting back of the laurel hedge along the B4060 was undoubtedly positive, they were concerned that this may have inadvertently worsened the speeding issue.

Specific concerns were also raised about the road past the school, which is narrow and further complicated by parents dropping off children. The proposal was made to create a "School Safety Zone," clearly marking out the area to raise driver awareness of the school and encourage reduced speeds. This could involve painted road signs or other markings.

A suggestion was made to investigate the possibility of having a speed reduction on the road between Wotton and Dursley from 50 mph to 40 mph to help support further speed reductions within the village, possibly down to 30 mph. It was noted that the road between Dursley and Uley is already 40 mph and is far less winding.

The council is focusing on various speed-calming measures, including participation in the "20 is Plenty" initiative and working on a school crossing initiative. The Chair is liaising with Hillesley Parish to learn from their best practices in speed calming.

A suggestion was made to carry out an audit, including counting and filming traffic flow with speed cameras. Parish members will need training to conduct this audit at specific locations to measure vehicle speeds effectively.

Other initiatives being considered include improving road signage, which is currently poor, and installing white gates with clear signage at the village entrances to help reduce speed by marking the start of the village more prominently.

The council expressed interest in developing a Task and Finish Group to further explore and develop road calming initiatives.

A comment was made regarding Stumpwell Lane, specifically at the T-junction going towards Wotton, where average speeds are being measured using black monitoring wires across the road.

The council acknowledged that a previous speed test was conducted in North Nibley, and there may be a potential follow-up based on the findings of that research. Feedback from residents noted that making changes to traffic regulations is challenging.

It was clarified that the council has not committed to a crossing patrol as a solution, and this stance should be communicated clearly.

There is potential for conducting a community survey to gather residents' feedback on road safety concerns and priorities.

Action: Councillor Lisa Carr to continue working on the Speedwatch and Road Safety projects

Action: Councillor James Smith to prepare Google Surveys

4. To receive and approve the accuracy of the minutes of the council's September 2024 meeting (appendix 1)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and will be signed at the next meeting

5. To receive an update on actions from previous meetings (appendix 2)

Clerk had circulated an action list with updates (where available). A copy will be made available on the Parish Council website.

It was agreed that the list would be placed in a shared folder as a live tracker, allowing councillors to update it during the month to streamline information sharing between meetings and form part of the priority update for councillors to report back at each meeting.

6. To receive and approve applications for co-option (if any)

No applications for co-option were received

7. The Council to receive the following reports:

- a) Written report from district councillors

The District Councillors had circulated a report prior to the meeting which has been shared on the Parish Council website. The following sections of the report were highlighted:

- The council has agreed to purchase 8 new council properties, which will require matched funding.
- Concerns were raised at the Environment Committee meeting about the increase in housing numbers proposed by Stroud District under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The planning framework locks in housing numbers and may require immediate work to meet higher targets. The final version of the NPPF is expected by the end of the year, and any changes will take effect immediately, impacting planning applications.
- Once the NPPF is published, the local planning authority will send out briefing notes regarding the changes. Qualified planners will help councillors understand the impact of these changes.
- Auditing standards were discussed, and treasury management accounts were signed off without any issues.
- Biodiversity and conservation were covered in the Cotswold Natural Landscape annual review, with an emphasis on grassland, farming, and protected land. The nature recovery strategy was also mentioned.
- The constabulary is facing cuts, and uncertainty remains about future grant funding. The Rural England Prosperity Fund may be a potential source of funding for community groups.

b) Written report from county councillor

County Councillor, Linda Cohen had circulated a report prior to the meeting which has been shared on the Parish Council website. The following sections of the report were highlighted:

- The councillor flagged support for the "Build Back Better" initiative, which supports community projects, including litter picks, drain clearing, and maintaining public rights of way.
- Updates were provided on road safety, including exploring the possibility of a school crossing patrol through the "FBS" (to be checked for liability and feasibility). There is also consideration of whether this should be voluntary.
- A survey proposal is being developed to gather resident feedback on road safety.
- Issues were highlighted with drainage on Woodlane and the need for a grit bin at the cemetery.
- The "Robin Bus" service is being shared and publicised to increase awareness.
- Encouragement for children to take up swimming as part of a new community campaign.
- A new council campaign is asking residents to return walking frames and wheelchairs, with a suggestion to advertise this in the Edge publication.

8. To review and comment on the following planning applications, enforcement notices and appeals:

a) **S.24/0476/FUL**|Retrospective change of use from a domestic paraphernalia storage unit to one Class E unit and two newly built Class E units (revised application)

The Parish Council discussed the application and noted their comments from April 2024.

The Parish Council resolved to reconfirm their previous comments and to forward the summary which was read by Councillor Liesl Smith to Stroud District Council. See appendix 1 below.

b) **S.24/1650/AGR**|Widening of track entrance and maintenance of existing track|Access Track To Park Wood North Nibley Gloucestershire

The Parish Council discussed the application and resolved to make comment to Stroud District Council as follows: The Parish Council assumes that the applicant will be agreeing a Woodland Management Plan with the Forestry Commission and that the Plan will take in to account biodiversity considerations for the landscape;

The plan accompanying the application doesn't appear to be accurate and doesn't reflect the position on the ground. The current wall is not dilapidated and there are no substantial heaps of rubble at the entrance. Whilst the end of the wall on the north western side of the entrance is overgrown, it is understood to be in good condition, as is the section of wall on the south eastern side of the entrance. The application form says that the wall will not be affected by the proposal yet the dimensions on the plan don't appear to tally with that assertion. Whilst the Parish Council accepts the need for wider access for modern forestry machinery, this shouldn't be to the undue detriment of the substantial wall which is a feature of the landscape in this location. The Parish Council will therefore be grateful if the Planning Officer can visit the site and clarify whether or not the wall will be affected under the proposal and advise so that the Parish Council can consider the matter further.

9. To note decisions on planning applications, enforcement notices and appeals since last meeting of the council as per planning report (appendix 3)

The council noted receipt of the report from clerk.

Action: Clerk to review planning report to ensure any 2024 undecided applications are included

10. To discuss Parish Council responsibility for Closed Churchyard Maintenance and agree any actions

Following a meeting and conversations at the last Parish Council meeting, the following points were discussed:

- **Trees:** Quotes have been obtained for tree safety surveys, with the options to either survey the cemetery, churchyard, and quarry separately for £400 or all three for £800. The council will obtain more information to make an informed decision on the quotes. (Do we need an additional survey on the cemetery, as we have had one this year)

- **Tombstones:** An initial survey of St. Martins was proposed. Of the 25 listed tombstones, none appear alarming, but some require work. The council will await more information, with a potential for grant funding.
- **Pedestrian Gate:** No issues were reported, and the Church is happy with the current gate.
- **Forest School:** Concerns were raised about the safety of children in the churchyard for a forest school, including risks from uneven ground and proximity to the road. Whilst the Council supports the principle of the forest school, it was felt that the Churchyard had too many practical safety issues associated with it for it to be the most appropriate location for this use. Councillors also wanted to understand more about their current insurance cover before they could agree to such a proposal.

Action: Cllr Brown to convey to North Nibley Primary School Headteacher that the Parish Council were unable to give their consent to the Churchyard being used for a Forest School

11. To discuss maintenance of Parish Council owned trees

This item was covered under item 11

12. To receive an update on Play Area planning and funding and agree any actions

Concerns from legal stakeholders were noted, and further actions will be taken by working party.

13. To receive an update on Road Safety actions and funding and agree any actions

Updates were provided on traffic calming initiatives, including information shared by clerk on the installation of white gateways. A Task and Finish Group will be set up to address these measures in detail.

Action: Parish Council to conduct a survey to gather public input, audit road use during peak hours, and obtain a second quote for the white gates.

14. To receive an update on Biodiversity Planning and agree any actions

A community Biodiversity discussion meeting has been arranged for 22nd October. Responses have been received from the article in On The Edge regarding this so it is hoped there will be some public support. The Chair asked if photos could be taken at the meeting for inclusion in the next On The Edge article

15. To agree to delegate authority to clerk to set up a new bank account for the Parish Council

The Parish Council agreed to delegate authority to clerk to arrange a new banking account for the Parish Council

Action: Clerk to research banking options and apply for new account

16. To review and agree Parish Council Policies and Procedures as per review timeline:

a) Winter Action Plan

The Parish Council reviewed the plan and agreed to defer to November meeting

Action: Clerk to investigate training and support available to volunteers from Gloucestershire County Council

Action: Councillor Brown to amend the policy to fall inline with the Parishes specific requirements

17. Parish council finances

a. To review and agree payments on the payment schedule (appendix 4)

The following payments amounting to £924.92 were approved for payment

Payments - October 2024

A Rossiter

Salary (Local Government Act 1972, S112 (2) (2A))

NEST

To pay employer pension contributions: (Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, Regulation 67)

Water Plus

Water (Local Government Act 1972, S214)

SLCC

Expenses (Local Government Act 1972, S112 (2) (2A))

b. To note any receipts (appendix 5)

The following receipts were noted:

Receipts - October 2024	Sum of Income
Stroud District Council	£10250

(Local Government Finance Act 1992, Section 41)

c. To review and agree bank reconciliation (appendix 6)

This item was deferred due to absence of the clerk

d. To carry out internal finance risk management check

The internal finance risk management check was deferred.

Action: Councillor Brown to carry out an independent review of the finances

18. To receive an update from clerk on Parish Council correspondence not included within agenda (appendix 7)

Item deferred

Action: Clerk to add any notable correspondence to next month's update

19. To receive and approve written cemetery report from Burial Clerk and agree any actions/requests

In order to address the continuing issue of dealing with the contents of the litter bin, it was proposed that the bin should be removed for a trial period to see if this helped with the matter.

The Parish Council thanked the burial clerk for her work.

20. To note any risk assessments carried out

Risk assessments have been carried out on the defibs and cabinets

21. To receive verbal update from councillors on their activities since last meeting

Incident regarding the defibrillator at the Village Hall was noted. Guidelines for return of the defib will be added to the case to aid public in future emergencies.

Action: Clerk to prepare a notice to be put inside the defib cabinet

Proposed road closures in 2025 were discussed, with concerns raised about congestion and accident risks. Stroud councillors will investigate further.

A resident had reported a leaking water issue on Barrs Lane to Severn Trent Water. They had tested the water and reported that it was natural water, most likely from a spring, rather than mains or foul water. It was uncertain who was therefore responsible for the issue

Updates on a robbery in the village were provided. Chair to ask the Clerk to obtain regular police updates.

The headteacher would like to work on brightening up the bus shelter and needs clarification on ownership and permissions.

Action: Clerk to contact headteacher with details for contacts re bus shelter

Jean Palmer, who has diligently and voluntarily managed the flower bed on the traffic island opposite the Black Horse will be handing over responsibility of this task in the Spring. The Parish Council thanked Jean for all of her contributions to the community.

The council discussed the phone box at Pitt Court, currently owned by BT, and considered refurbishing it.

It was noted that the third defibrillator should be added to the asset register.

Action: Clerk to update Asset Register

Action: Clerk to notify insurers of new defib purchase

22. To note date of next Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will be the 6th November.

Meeting Closed

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. –

Item 8 - To review and comment on the following planning applications, enforcement notices and appeals:

- a) **S.24/0476/FUL** Retrospective change of use from a domestic paraphernalia storage unit to one Class E unit and two newly built Class E units (revised application)

Location: Swinhay Farm Buildings, Vernals Lane, Swinhay.

Note: As a council we support investment on the wider community work force

Comments re : Resubmission of planning application to

- 1.widen the single file Vernals Lane with 3 passing places
- 2.revised biodiversity plan.

This was discussed at the Parish Council's April 2024 meeting and the following comments were made:

- 1.No development should be granted until an acceptable alternative vehicle access is agreed. Such access should be provided through Swinhay house estate land which is under control of the applicant.
2. The existing vehicle access from Vernals Lane shall be permanently closed before construction work commences and no traffic should use the road thereafter.

3. Any planning permission shall be made personal to McMurty Automotove Ltd only for the research, development production and sales of its electric vehicle and no other purpose without written consent of the local planning authority.

4. The use of the site shall cease within 6 months of the alternative buildings on land adjacent to New Mills being ready for occupation.

5. The applicants should be required to make good the damage to Vernals Lane in agreement with highways authority.

The Council requests that decision is made on alternative proposed site adjacent to New Mills as soon as possible (S.23/1030/FUL).

The applicant looks at levelling off the Vernals Road and putting in 3 passing places. Highways have approved the development and use of Swinhay Farm Buildings retrospective planning application but only when the road changes have been made.

Concerns

E14 – proposal will impact on environment and road safety.

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3 Public foot paths feed into Vernals Lane

It is not only Vernals lane that is single file – Swinhay Lane is too, and provisions have not been made for this. This road too is showing signs of impact with heavy usage. Farmers need access to this road and their land with their heavy equipment as well as pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.

Visibility down Swinhay Road is poor even when the hedges have been cut back, no risk assessment has been made of this.

CP14 – No unacceptable measures of exposure to noise or pollution

The plan is for 23 people on site at one time with 5 car parking spaces for visitors.

TRICS database has been used to anticipate the traffic usage using 100sqm of floor space – it calculates there will be 36 journeys in total on single file road. This does not look at the delivery vans, lorries using the road - no number of changes to Vernals Lane will overcome the fact that this single file country lane is completely unsuitable for this level of traffic.

The traffic to this site should be re-routed to go through the applicants' own property (although this would still entail the heavy traffic on Swinhay Lane which is unsuitable for this increased usage). It is not appropriate for an individual or company to widen a road such as this without the agreement of all stakeholders.

In the Highways report it states one of the requirements is to improve the sight lines on Vernal Lane and Swinhay Lane Junction – has the third party land been considered for this - particularly on the east side of Swinhay junction? No consideration has been made by highways for alternative route to Swinhay Farm Buildings across surrounding third-party land.

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ES7 - No biodiversity/Ecology report has been submitted by the Biodiversity Team attached to council on impact of removing hedges, trees and road expansion on the local wildlife.

How is the loss of hedgerows, trees going to affect the aesthetics of the attractive countryside – this will affect the views of the residents/visitors in the area (contravenes CP14).

The original application for Swinhay was to be a temporary to keep the business going until planning application had been agreed (S.23/1030/FUL) on the New Mills land near Renishaws Roundabout, Charfield. This has just had Highways approval. This site will also be on the planned Greenway so safe to walk and cycle to work for the local community.

NNPC requested April 2024 that the site at Swinhay ceases to be used when New Mills is ready for occupation.

What is the master plan? It appears that both sites are being prepared for the up scaling of business – has this planning application changed, why is there not a fresh application?

Core Policy CP14 – No unacceptable adverse effects on amenities or neighbours. Local residents has now informed the NNPC that there has been erection of new electric substation at the Swinhay site and electric car batteries will be assembled on site added to their production list. We support the residents' concerns.

The original planning application was for the temporary purpose of the buildings to be for research, development and small-scale production and sales of their flagship electric Spelling car.

We are concerned that the planning permission is already retrospective on the Swinhay Farm buildings and McMurtry Automotive are forging ahead with further changes without going through planning processes. This does not paint the reputation of local businesses positively to get the local community's support.

None of the comments made by North Nibley Parish Council in April 2024, have been acknowledged in Gloucestershire Highways Report we urge the Planning Case Officer to consider these concerns before they write their final report.