



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## COUNCIL

20 October 2022

7.00 - 9.46 pm

Council Chamber

### Minutes

#### Membership

##### **Councillor Steve Robinson (Chair)**

Councillor Beki Aldam  
 Councillor Paula Baker  
 Councillor Natalie Bennett  
 Councillor Catherine Braun  
 Councillor Martin Brown  
 Councillor Doina Cornell  
 Councillor Gordon Craig  
 Councillor Kate Crews  
 Councillor Laurie Davies  
 Councillor Katrina Davis  
 Councillor Robin Drury-Layfield  
 Councillor Jonathan Edmunds  
 Councillor Christopher Evans  
 Councillor Helen Fenton  
 Councillor Colin Fryer  
 Councillor Lindsey Green  
 Councillor Jessie Hoskin  
 Councillor Nicholas Housden  
 Councillor Nick Hurst  
 Councillor Steve Hynd  
 Councillor Martin Baxendale  
 Councillor Jason Bullingham  
 Councillor Victoria Gray  
 Councillor Dave Mossman  
 Councillor Rich Wilsher

\*= Absent

##### **Councillor Trevor Hall (Vice-Chair)**

Councillor George James  
 Councillor Julie Job  
 Councillor Christopher Jockel  
 Councillor John Jones  
 Councillor Haydn Jones  
 Councillor Norman Kay  
 Councillor Loraine Patrick  
 Councillor Martin Percy  
 Councillor Keith Pearson  
 Councillor Nigel Prenter  
 Councillor Mattie Ross  
 Councillor Mark Ryder  
 Councillor Lucas Schoemaker  
 Councillor Ashley Smith  
 Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy  
 Councillor Haydn Sutton  
 Councillor Brian Tipper  
 Councillor Ken Tucker  
 Councillor Chloe Turner  
 Councillor Tricia Watson  
 Councillor Chris Brine  
 Councillor Stephen Davies  
 Councillor Jenny Miles  
 Councillor Gill Oxley

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#### Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive  
 Strategic Director of Resources  
 Strategic Director of Communities  
 Monitoring Officer

Corporate Policy and Governance  
 Manager  
 Community Health & Wellbeing Manager  
 Senior Democratic Services & Elections  
 Officer  
 Democratic Services & Elections Officer

**CL.028**      **VICE-CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

Councillor Norman Kay was nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of Council.

**RESOLVED That Councillor Norman Kay be elected Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2022-23.**

**CL.029**      **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baxendale, Brine, Bullingham, Stephen Davies, Gray, Miles, Mossman, Oxley and Wilsher.

The council offered their best wishes to Councillor Wilsher's wife who was unwell in hospital.

**CL.030**      **Declaration of Interests**

There were none.

**CL.031**      **Minutes**

Councillor John Jones proposed an amendment to include the full text of his Member Question and the responses received at the last Council Meeting instead of the hyperlink that had been included. Councillor Housden seconded the amendment.

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022 were approved as a correct record following the amendment made above.**

**CL.032**      **Long Service Awards for Youth Council Members**

The Chair presented long service awards to three Youth Council Members and provided information regarding their time with the Youth Council and their achievements. The three members receiving awards were Charlotte Bignall, Lily Haines and Tom Wickham-Bassett.

**CL.033**      **Announcements**

The Chair thanked Stephen Taylor for the support he had provided as Interim Monitoring Officer for the past year and thanked Mike Hammond the previous Head of Community Services for his 33 years service at the Council.

The Leader advised that the joint bid from Councils in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire, for a fusion plan that was supported by the wider Western Gateway area, had lost out to Nottinghamshire. They had also recently considered a proposal for an investment zone on the Berkeley site but were unable to support this as the relaxing of planning controls and environmental protection were too much of a risk for the local community and the environment. She reiterated that the Council remained committed to the regeneration of the Berkeley site.

**CL.034**      **Public Question Time**

There were none.

**CL.035**      **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND POSITIONS**

The Chair advised that the political balance had been recalculated following the formation of a new political group called the Independent Left, the Group Leader was Councillor Natalie Bennett. An additional seat was also being proposed on Strategy & Resources Committee and the Constitution Working Group (CWG) would be tasked with reviewing the number of seats on Committees prior to the annual meeting in May 2023.

In response to Councillor Housden it was confirmed that the financial implications were included in paragraph 4.1 of the report and that there were no limits as to the number of group leaders that a council could have.

In response to a question from Councillor Ryder it was confirmed that in order to have continuity of Committee Chairs some seats had been exchanged between the alliance political groups so that all of the policy Committee Chairs had a seat on Strategy and Resources Committee. It was also confirmed that in addition to reviewing the number of seats available on Committees, the CWG would also review the rules around who could sit on Strategy and Resources Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Braun and seconded by Councillor Bennett.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried with one abstention.

**RESOLVED To**

- a) **Approve the changes to committee membership and positions as set out in the report and appendix; and**
- b) **Approve an additional seat on Strategy and Resources Committee.**

**CL.036**      **Member Questions**

Member questions were submitted, they were asked by Councillor Haydn Jones. (Refer to the Council's [recording](#) and [Agenda Item 9](#)).

Councillor Jones asked a supplementary question as to why paragraph 6.74 from the Draft Local Plan, which demonstrated longer term aspiration to reconnect with the Thames at Lechlade, could not be included as part of the Canal Strategy. The Chair of Environment Committee, Councillor Turner, advised that the Canal Strategy, which had been approved as a supplementary planning document, referred to the relevant sections of the Draft Local Plan and therefore the information regarding the canal restoration to the east of Brimscombe had been included.

**CL.037**      **Response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis**

Councillor Aldam, Vice Chair of Community Services and Licencing Committee, introduced the report and thanked the Officers for their hard work in supporting the cost-of-living crisis.

She confirmed that the council were drawing on its own resources as well as that which had been given by central government and distributed by Gloucestershire County Council. The strain on communities and on the resources of statutory and non-statutory

agencies was set to increase significantly however, there was a lack of detailed information about what groups would be most affected. The usage of Food Banks had already risen by 90% and the use of the Citizens Advice Bureau for support had also risen sharply in recent months.

She stated that they were asking for delegation to the Strategic Director of Communities to help lead the response to the cost-of-living crisis and be given the ability to respond appropriately as more information emerged. She highlighted the actions that had been proposed to help provide support which included:

- Appoint the Strategic Director of Communities to be the cost-of-living crisis workstream lead.
- A group of Officers from across services to be identified to prioritise the cost-of-living crisis work.
- Training for all front-line staff and volunteers.
- Direct contact through printed letters sent to home addresses of those who are digitally excluded and posters for public spaces.
- Produce a map of Warm Space activities and identify when local support is not readily available.
- Work with key partners to help coordinate Warm Spaces.
- Distribute future Household Support Funding.
- Financial contribution and support for Community Hubs.
- Funding portal for Warm Spaces.
- Communications Plan.
- Update the Risk Register.

In response to Councillor Studdert-Kennedy it was confirmed that there was a typo on Page 42 Paragraph 4, where it should have read 'to' rather than 'by'. It was also confirmed that GDPR was a barrier to sourcing the information required in order to support those most at need directly. However, they were looking at the data that the Council held and working with partners who had their own data. The Council would provide support to partners who held their own information in order for them to carry out the work and target the necessary groups of people without the need for the Council to be provided with the information protected by GDPR. It was also advised that Parish and Town Councils would be provided with support.

Cllr Turner asked whether they could make sure that Members were receiving relevant information in terms of helping to support their communities. The Community Health and Wellbeing Manager advised them that the website would be updated regularly and that they would need support from Councillors.

Councillor Jockel asked for more information about how the response would be coordinated and how the Council would work in partnership with the community sector. The Community Health and Wellbeing Manager advised that they were acutely aware that the community groups were the front line for the cost-of-living crisis and they were working very closely with The Hubs however, it was difficult in communities where there wasn't a strong network of people working together. The Strategic Director of Resources provided reassurance that the council was working strategically and closely across the directorates, there had been a member working group established to help support the cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Watson asked whether the Council could consider providing direct residents to payments to be paid in cash rather than supermarket vouchers and whether they were

exploring options to allow funding for businesses especially where there were gaps in the not for profit support. The Strategic Director of Communities advised that they were looking to identify gaps in support and they would be interested in looking at all opportunities including working with the private sector. He further advised that they were looking to see if they could move to direct payments but there were issues regarding GDPR and the practicalities of providing cash payments.

Proposed by Councillor Aldam and seconded by Councillor Braun.

Councillor Braun offered her thanks to the Community Health and Wellbeing Manager and Strategic Director of Communities for all of the work they were doing to help coordinate a response to the cost-of-living crisis and was pleased to see that they were allocating funding for the immediate response and investing in the long term community resilience.

Councillor Housden highlighted the Household Support Fund distributed by the County Council and the Holiday Activity and Food programme which had supported over 60% of children on free school meals. He welcomed the £100k allocation for the cost-of-living crisis and stated that it was important that everyone worked together during the difficult period.

Councillor Laurie Davies thanked the Community Health and Wellbeing Manager for the support she had provided community hubs and stated the people in her ward were going to benefit from the work the council was doing to support the cost-of-living crisis.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED To**

- a) support the implementation of a cost-of-living crisis response set out in this report.**
- b) Agree the allocation of the £100k funding previously committed to this work by the Strategy and Resources Committee.**
- c) Delegate responsibility for developing this work to the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with the Chair of Community Services & Licensing Committee**

#### **CL.038      Cost of Living Emergency Motion proposed by Councillor Aldam and seconded by Councillor Bennett**

Councillor Aldam presented the Motion to show the residents and businesses of the Stroud District that their elected Councillors care about what matters to them. She stated that it was an international crisis and the government needed to step up so that more support could be provided. She highlighted some key information including:

- Those aged between 30 and 50 were dying in greater numbers.
- NHS was facing a crippling winter.
- The BBC reported that one schools energy bills in South Gloucestershire could rise by up to 414% in December 2023.
- Teachers were experiencing burn out and were coming closer to industrial action.
- Gloucestershire Community Foundation found that total bills were higher than income for the poorer 60% of the country.
- 78% of workers were paid below the real living wage.
- 1 in 7 older person would go without heating that winter.

She asked the council to join her in declaring an emergency and calling on their colleagues in central government to make a clear plan to help Stroud residents and businesses navigate the coming uncertainties.

Councillor Jockel commended the motion and stated that the event threatened serious damage to human welfare and was therefore the definition of an emergency as per the civil contingencies act 2004.

Councillor James drew on his personal experiences as a teacher and stated that he had seen more children coming to school hungry and he had witnessed teachers bringing in food for children. He stated that they needed to support people better and more needed to be done.

Councillor Edmunds echoed the comments made by Councillor James and stated that 42% of people with disabilities were experiencing rises in the cost of living and were having to reduce spending on food and essentials. He identified that the long term solutions for the cost of living crisis overlapped with the climate crisis.

Councillor Housden stated that there was not one council that could deal with all of the problems but that cross council work was essential.

Councillor Cornell stated that they needed to see an uplift to benefits and that she was glad to see they would be writing to the government as they needed to take action.

Councillor Bennett was pleased to hear support for the motion across the Chamber.

On being put to the Vote the Motion was carried unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

##### **To note**

- **The basic cost of living continues to rise, and despite the recently announced cap on household energy prices, there remains around an £800 gap on average between the rise in the cost of living and the support packages for families on means tested benefits. [Joseph Rowntree Foundation]**
- **The high rate of inflation in the UK, predicted by the Bank of England to rise to 11 per cent this winter. [forbes.com]**
- **These factors are causing a Cost of Living Emergency and resulting in a significant fall in people's incomes, as pay growth and benefit uprating fails to keep pace with the increase in the cost of essential items.**
- **Food poverty is already a reality for at least 4.7 million adults in the UK [[https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/food\\_poverty](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/food_poverty)], and the Cost of Living Emergency will greatly exacerbate this problem.**
- **Those on the lowest incomes will be hardest hit by inflation and the increase in energy bills, and the support offered to them by Government so far is completely inadequate to bridge the cost of living gap. [<https://jpit.uk/enoughtolive>]**
- **The Cost of Living Emergency will also have a damaging impact on local businesses, the self-employed, and valued employers in Stroud District, who will require additional financial support from Government to cover their basic costs.**

- Without urgent government intervention there will be a significant increase in the number of households who experience food poverty and fuel poverty in Stroud District this winter, leading to increased health problems; a rise in mental health issues and emergencies; decreased quality of life; and an exacerbation of associated social and emotional issues.
- The SDC Council officers, Citizens Advice and community hubs are already working hard to alleviate the pressure and desperation. But they should not be bearing the responsibility of what should be statutory support. The National Government needs to outline a plan and communicate it to local authorities as quickly as possible.

**This Council believes that:**

- No one in the Stroud District should go hungry.
- None of our residents should have to choose between food or warmth, or not be able to have either.

**This Council therefore resolves to:**

- Declare a ‘Cost of Living Emergency.’
- Request the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister, and Stroud District MPs, to call for:
  - Immediate financial support to help people to manage the Cost of Living Emergency, with most support provided to low income households, and
  - A fully funded nationwide commitment to improve the energy efficiency of homes (and consequently reduce energy bills), noting that this initiative is also required to deliver on the Government’s own commitment to net zero carbon by 2050.
  - Support The Great Homes Upgrade campaign, which is calling on the Government to upgrade 19 million homes by 2030 to make sure that everyone can have a well-insulated home, heated by clean, green energy. [[www.greathomesupgrade.org](http://www.greathomesupgrade.org)]
  - Call on the National Government to produce and make public a clear plan to deal with the crisis and alleviate the burden on our residents and local businesses. Emergency funding needs to be forthcoming and distributed in a way that allows District Councils like ours to be able to process it in the most effective way for our residents.

### **CL.039      REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL’S CONSTITUTION**

Councillor Pearson, Chair of the Constitution Working Group, introduced the report and thanked the members of the cross-party constitution working group and the Monitoring Officer for their support. He drew Members attention to the key changes made to the Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules and the Scheme of Officer Delegation.

Councillor Pearson also advised that it had been agreed that the Development Management Advisory Panel would be asked to consider whether Ward Members should also be able to request that expediency notices were prepared and that Cllr Kay would be invited to the discussion.

Councillor Percy asked whether Officers who had changes to their delegated powers would be informed of the new Scheme and whether they had been consulted. It was

confirmed that the changes to the Scheme of Delegation were prompted following consultation with Officers and that they would be made aware of the adopted scheme.

Proposed by Councillor Pearson and seconded by Councillor Studdert-Kennedy.

Councillor Studdert-Kennedy offered his thanks to the Interim Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Ross thanked Councillor Pearson for his chairmanship of the working group and for the excellent advice received from the Monitoring Officers.

Councillor James thanked the Constitution Working Group and Equality and Diversity Working Group on their decision for the use of gender neutral pronouns throughout the Constitution.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED To:**

- (i) **Adopt the documents at Appendix A and Appendix C and incorporate them into the Constitution with immediate effect.**
- (ii) **Note that the Equalities Task Group has suggested the best way forward in relation to the use of gender pronouns in the Constitution and that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend gender pronouns where appropriate.**
- (iii) **Authorise the Monitoring Officer to correct any minor inconsistencies between Sections 2 and 3 of the Constitution and the Articles to ensure that the wording in the Articles prevailed.**
- (iv) **Authorise the Monitoring Officer to change the name of 'Audit Committee' in Article 7 and Article 8.4 back to 'Audit and Standards Committee' and substitute the word 'proven' for 'found' at the end of Article 7.3.**

**CL.040 NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

**CL.041 Motion regarding Electric Vehicle Charging Points proposed by Councillor Green and seconded by Councillor Haydn Jones**

Councillor Green introduced the Motion and explained that on 18 July 2019 the Council agreed to move to the use of electric and hybrid vehicles and install a number of charging points across the Stroud District. The plan for the provision of EV charging points had not yet been finalised. She expressed her disappointment that action had not been taken sooner and that she hoped Members would support the Motion to ensure the first charging points were installed and that a plan was produced for a wider roll out.

A friendly amendment as laid out with the additions in red below was proposed by Councillor Turner and agreed by Councillor Green and Councillor H Jones.

- i. ~~(At least 2 Electric~~ **vehicle** ~~charging points be installed in each of our council owned/managed car parks in at least four market town locations,~~ within the next ~~2 years~~ **12 months, with** ~~and that a wider~~ **phased** rollout plan ~~be included reflected~~ in the 23/24 budget.; ~~and~~
- ii. **A plan for the provision of EV charge points be brought to Environment Committee in February 2023, for adoption.**



- iii. Users ~~Residents~~ be allowed to **park their cars overnight for the purpose of using the charging points.** ~~use the charging points and have 60 minutes free car parking for that purpose.~~
- iv. The Strategic Director of Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Chair **& Vice-Chair** of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chair **& Vice-Chair** of the Environment Committee, to determine the appropriate method of funding the installation of the charging points and to enter into any necessary documentation to that end.

Councillor Turner acknowledged that the rollout had not moved as fast as they had liked however, she advised that it was a complex exercise. They had engaged consultants earlier that year and they were now in a position to move forward.

Councillor Schoemaker asked what the advantage of having chargers in car parks was if they were more expensive than charging at home. Councillor Turner advised that the chargers would be for those who do not have the provision for charging electric vehicles at home and for those who need to charge whilst they are away from their home. Councillor Green advised that there were also service vehicles and SDC owned vehicles that could use the charging points.

Councillor Prenter asked whether Taxi drivers could recharge their vehicles at the charging points. Councillor Turner confirmed that the chargers would be available for anyone to use but there would be a charge to park in the space. She advised that the Chamber of Trade were looking at charging points for taxi vehicles through a different project.

Councillor Cornell asked whether there would be consultation with the Town Councils regarding the best places to put the charging points and whether they would be prioritising Towns that don't have any charging points. Councillor Turner advised that the consultants had considered the existing provisions and they would be having conversations with the market towns.

Councillor Pearson asked that they consider what type of charging lead to install as different vehicles needed different leads.

In response to Councillor Pearson and Councillor Kay it was confirmed the consultants would be considering the best type of lead to install and whether fast charging points were appropriate.

Councillor Hynd stated that they lived in a District that had woeful active travel infrastructure around cycling and walking and members would have received many complaints about the bus service. He further stated that they needed a shift in how transport funding was allocated and urged those who sat on Gloucestershire Council to take that back.

Councillor Layfield advised that he welcomed any initiative that addressed the climate emergency however, Electric Vehicles were only a small part of the solution. He asked Members to think bigger and show greater ambition when it comes to climate change.

Councillor H Jones stated that this would be a step forward and it was important that when decisions were made the actions are followed up on he asked all Members to support the amended Motion.

Councillor Turner stated she was looking forward to working with members of the Environment Committee on the strategy in February.

Councillor Green hoped that everyone would be able to support the Motion.

On being put to the Vote the Motion was carried unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

### **That:**

- I. **Electric vehicle charging points be installed in council owned/managed car parks in at least four market town locations, within the next 12 months, with a wider phased rollout plan reflected in the 23/24 budget.**
- II. **A plan for the provision of EV charge points be brought to Environment Committee in February 2023, for adoption.**
- III. **Users be allowed to park their cars overnight for the purpose of using the charging points.**
- IV. **The Strategic Director of Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Chair & Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chair & Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, to determine the appropriate method of funding the installation of the charging points and to enter into any necessary documentation to that end.**

## **CL.042      DISPENSATION UNDER SECTION 85 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Councillor Housden introduced the report and passed on his best wishes to Councillors Bullingham and Mossman and hoped the Council would join him in supporting their leave of absence for a period of 6 months.

Proposed by Councillor Housden and seconded by Councillor Pearson.

On being put to the Vote the Motion was carried unanimously.

## **RESOLVED To:**

- a) **Authorise Councillor Mossman to be absent from all meetings of the Authority for a 6 month period with effect from 21 October 2022.**
- b) **Authorise Councillor Bullingham to be absent from all meetings of the Authority for a 6 month period with effect from 21 October 2022.**

## **CL.043      Community Governance Review**

Councillor Braun presented the report which asked Council to agree to carry out a Community Governance Review which would allow the Council to consider governance arrangements for Town and Parish Councils and ensured that they continued to reflect local identities and facilitated effective and convenient local government. It was confirmed that a district wide community governance review was conducted in 2019 and that the Council resolved at that time to conduct a future review of the parishes which contain the Great Oldbury development by the end of 2023. It was recommended that all parishes who submitted a request were included in the review.

The report set out the timetable for the review including the two public consultation stages that took place. The first stage consultation was due to start at the end of this month. All ward Councillors for the parishes included in the review would be invited to join a Working Group to analyse the responses to the consultation and prepare the final recommendations for Council approval in July 2023. Any changes made would come into force at the next local elections scheduled for May 2024. It was highlighted that changes would only be made if they were necessary to reflect the identity and interests of local communities and ensure effective and convenient local governance. Councillor Braun also highlighted an error in the table in section 2.3 of the report and confirmed that it should have stated that Frampton on Severn currently had 9 councillors instead of 11.

Councillor Hurst advised that Minchinhampton did not wish to take part in the review but the only reason it had been included was because Nailsworth had put in a request to review its boundaries.

Proposed by Councillor Braun and Councillor Cornell seconded.

Councillor Ryder advised that the implementation of a new Parish Council at Hunts Grove following the 2019 Community Governance Review had been a very positive experience.

Councillor Ashley Smith advised that Woodchester had also only been included because of Nailsworths requests to consider its boundaries.

Councillor Cornell thanked the team for the presentation they delivered to Ward Members and Parish and Town Councils and confirmed that through consultation with the community they could look at whether any changes needed to be made.

Councillor Braun highlighted the consultation process at paragraph 3.4 which involved many stages and meant that residents and Parish and Town Councils would be able to get involved at every stage.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED That in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, a Community Governance Review be undertaken for the Parish and Town Council areas of Cam, Dursley, Eastington, Frampton, Horsley, Hunts Grove, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth, Standish, Stonehouse and Woodchester.**

The meeting closed at 9.46 pm

Chair