

Council
22/January2025



COTSWOLD
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 22 January 2025

Members present:

Nikki Ind	Mark Harris	
Gina Blomefield	Julia Judd	Jeremy Theyer
Claire Bloomer	Andrew Maclean	Clare Turner
Patrick Coleman	Helene Mansilla	Michael Vann
Daryl Corps	Mike McKeown	Jon Wareing
Mike Evely	Dilys Neill	Ian Watson
David Fowles	Andrea Pellegram	Tristan Wilkinson
Joe Harris	Nigel Robbins	Len Wilkins
Paul Hodgkinson	Gary Selwyn	
Angus Jenkinson	Tom Stowe	

Officers present:

Matthew Britton, Interim Forward Planning Lead	Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services	David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Kira Thompson, Election and Democratic Services Support Assistant
Adrian Harding, Interim Head of Planning	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive

61 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Juliet Layton, Councillor Ray Brassington, Councillor David Cunningham, Councillor Tony Slater, Councillor Tony Dale and Councillor Chris Twells. Councillor Spivey apologised in advance for her late arrival.

62 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

63 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting 27 November 2024 were considered.
There were no amendments.

A proposal to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held 27 November 2025 was proposed by Councillor Fowles and seconded by Councillor Bloomer.

Recommendation APPROVED

RESOLVED: Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 (Resolution) (Resolution)		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Evely, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Andrew Maclean, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	25
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Helene Mansilla and Andrea Pellegram	2
Carried		

64 Announcements from the Chair, Leader and Chief Executive

The Chair began by extending New Year's greetings to colleagues and residents, emphasizing the importance of working together in 2025.

The new Councillor for Chesterton, Andrea Pellegram was welcomed and the Chair also congratulated those recognised in the New Year's Honours List.

The 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was highlighted. The Chair reflected on the immense loss of over 1.1 million lives and stressed the need to preserve survivors' testimonies. They urged continued efforts to combat hatred, antisemitism, and discrimination, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity.

On a lighter note, the Chair shared their pride in representing the District Council at Christmas celebrations in the Forest of Dean and Cirencester. They also expressed enthusiasm for the opening of the Grace Network's Long Table project, recognizing its potential to support the community.

The Chief Executive also welcomed Councillor Pellegram to Cotswold District Council and thanked all election staff for ensuring the smooth running of the Chesterton by-election before handing over to Councillor Harris.

Councillor Harris, the Leader also extended New Year's greetings and welcomed the new Senior Democratic Services Officer. Councillor Andrea Pellegram, was also welcomed and her hard work during a challenging by-election campaign was commended.

Concerns about the government's new housing targets were addressed, with concerns raised about the targets given that 80% of the district is protected land. Councillor Harris argued that the lack of available land and skilled workers made these targets unattainable and stressed the need for a more strategic approach to housing development.

The Leader then spoke about devolution, and reaffirmed a commitment to decentralizing power but warned that current proposals could undermine democracy by consolidating authority under a single mayor. Opposition to the delay of Gloucestershire's local elections was also voiced, being considered as politically motivated. The importance of ensuring that any local government reorganization maintained community links and high-quality services was emphasised.

Councillor Harris stated that any major decisions would be brought back to Full Council for discussion, and emphasised a commitment to a future that would strengthen local democracy and serve the needs of Cotswold residents.

65 Unsung Heroes Award

The Chair introduced the Cotswold District Council Unsung Hero Awards, which recognize individuals making extraordinary contributions to their communities. They acknowledged the difficulty in selecting winners and encouraged future nominations.

Phil Miles was announced as the first-place recipient for his dedication as a community first responder with South-Western Ambulance. Despite the voluntary nature of his role, he remained on call almost daily, providing critical emergency care and support. Although unable to attend, Phil was praised for his selflessness, and service to the community. Councillor Andrew McLean was invited to present his award.

The two runners-up were John Lawrence and the Community Speedwatch Blockley team. John was recognised for his tireless promotion of Cirencester as a town crier, his involvement in the Male Voice Choir, and his extensive volunteer work at St John the Baptist Church and Beam Gymnastics. Louise Bowles and her Community Speedwatch

team were honoured for their efforts in tackling speeding issues, despite facing negativity, and for securing funding to enhance road safety.

The Chair expressed gratitude to all recipients for their dedication and contributions to the district.

The Leader added his congratulations and praised the great community spirit which motivated these individuals.

66 Public Questions

Mr David Hindle from Tetbury raised concerns about the restructuring of Cotswold District Council. He questioned the authority behind decisions regarding the grouping of services, management structure, and relative pay, noting that these did not appear to have been formally approved by the Cabinet or Full Council, or considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He referenced a Council report from 31 July 2024 mentioning a shared director across districts but found no details on CDC's internal structure. He asked Councillor Harris whether such significant reorganisations should have been publicly decided and whether the Council's constitution remained fit for purpose given the shift towards directly employed staff.

Councillor Harris acknowledged David Hindle's engagement with Council matters and assured him that all decisions regarding restructuring had followed due process, including oversight by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He offered to provide further details if anything had been missed. Regarding the constitution, he confirmed that updates were being made to reflect structural changes and invited David Hindle to meet for a further discussion.

The Monitoring Officer reminded Mr Hindle of past email exchanges and explained that the Council's constitution had been updated on 1 November 2024 to reflect the first phase of staff being in-sourced, with further changes expected. Mr Hindle was advised to check the website for the latest version and was informed that the upcoming budget focussed Council meeting in February, would include the legally required pay policy report outlining the new senior officer structure. He was also encouraged to follow the February Council agenda for further details.

67 Member Questions

Member questions and the supplementary questions and responses can be found in Annex A.

68 Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit Collaboration Agreement

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit (CFEU) Partnership Collaboration Agreement between Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils and Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Stroud and West Oxfordshire District Councils.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Councillor Mike Evely, proposed the approval of the collaboration agreement and explained how the partnership, which had been in place for seven years with six councils, had been crucial in preventing fraud and corruption, especially during the distribution of COVID business grants. The service was hosted by Cotswold District Council, and the proposal suggested continuing the partnership for another 10 years, with an option to extend for three more years. The report also highlighted that Cotswold would remain the host authority, with the option to give 18 months' notice if the responsibility was transferred. The Council was asked to approve the agreement.

Council discussed the report and councillors made the following points:

- The CFEU was seen as being a highly accountable and competent unit which reported to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- The service was seen as crucial for upholding trust, tackling fraud, and protecting public resources.
- The operational and economic efficiencies achieved by the partnership would be difficult for the partner councils to achieve individually.
- Cotswold District Council (CDC), as the host council, was commended for leading the way in this area.
- Given the financial challenges faced by the Council, there was also interest in exploring potential revenue generation opportunities through the service. There was a desire to discuss expanding the service to support other local authorities or broaden its scope.
- The two main areas of fraud were identified as being claiming single-person discounts for social housing and illegal subletting. The amounts involved were not seen as significant and it was unclear whether the recovered funds would benefit the Council or go to other bodies like government departments or housing associations. The emphasis was placed on using publicity to deter fraud.
- Officers in the ERS service were commended for working collaboratively with the CFEU to bring successful prosecutions against fly-tippers, which generated revenue and discouraged others from engaging in the same behaviour.

The recommendation in the report was proposed by Councillor Evely, seconded by Councillor Nigel Robbins, put to the vote and agreed by Council.

Councillor Daryl Corps did not vote.

RESOLVED: Council approved the Council entering into the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit Partnership Collaboration Agreement. (Resolution)		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Patrick Coleman, Mike Evey, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	26
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

69 Report of the Constitution Working Group

The report of the Constitution Working Group (CWG) was introduced by the Leader, Councillor Joe Harris, who thanked the CWG for the work they do and continue to do.

Councillors discussed the report and councillors made the following points:

- The end of paragraph 4.5 in the report should read 'of which the member had no previous knowledge'.
- The work of the working group and Mike Evey's chairing were praised.
- The importance of keeping the constitution up to date was highlighted and issues like attendance at virtual meetings were discussed.
- The need for ward members to be aware of significant developments within their areas was stressed to ensure that members were not blindsided and there were no surprises.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Mike Evey and seconded by Councillor David Fowles, put to the vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED: That Council :

- 1. Authorise the Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) to update Part D8 - Matters of Urgency, in the Constitution and**
- 2. Approve the addition of a Local Ward Member Protocol into the Constitution (Resolution)**

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	27
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

70 Moreton-in-Marsh Working Group Membership

The purpose of the report was to confirm membership of the Moreton-in-Marsh Working Group and to approve an updated Working Group Terms of Reference.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joe Harris, introduced the item and apologised for the delay in forming the working group but emphasised that the group was now ready to proceed. The purpose of the group was to gather feedback from local stakeholders and influence development proposals, while fostering better communication between parties.

The frustration in Moreton regarding the previous consultation was acknowledged and hope was expressed that the new group would help improve relations and dialogue. It was noted that similar groups might be set up for other Cotswold settlements in the future.

Councillors Jenkinson and Corps were thanked for their input on membership and mentioned the upcoming recommendations for including 20 members. The working group would represent a range of views from residents, businesses, community groups, and the town council, and substitutes would be included if needed.

In response to a comment from Councillor Neill, Councillor Harris agreed to look into including residents of Stow in the discussions as onlookers and said that the working group's approach would be further refined. A commitment to biodiversity and nature was also noted, confirming that experts could be brought in as necessary.

Council discussed the report and councillors made the following points:

- The Chair of the Working Group, attendees, and officers were thanked for their efforts in managing a complex and evolving situation.
- The appointment of the Leader as Chair of the Working Group was welcomed as a recognition of the significance of the proposed Moreton development.
- A company which had been included in the Working Group's membership was internationally recognised for its expertise in meadow and grass seeds, as well as its contributions to education.

Councillor Jenkinson proposed modifying the working group's membership by replacing the Morton Agricultural Show with the Morton Business Association, arguing that the latter better represented local businesses. They clarified that the business association, despite past difficulties, was now operational again.

Councillor Corps responded by reiterating appreciation for the officers' work and engagement with Moreton. He questioned the necessity of replacing the long-established charity that organised the agricultural show, emphasising its year-round charitable efforts. Instead, he suggested adding an extra member rather than removing the agricultural show.

Councillor Harris then proposed a five-minute adjournment to allow discussions between key members before proceeding. This proposal was seconded and agreed by Council.

Following a 5 minute adjournment, Councillor Corps proposed adding Morton Business Association to the membership of the working group without removing any other member. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Angus Jenkinson, was put to the vote and agreed by Council.

Council then returned to the substantive recommendations (incorporating the amendment). The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Joe Harris, seconded by Councillor Daryl Corps, put to the vote and approved by Council.

RESOLVED: Council approve the addition of Moreton Business Association to the membership of the Moreton-In-Marsh Working Group (Amendment)		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	27
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

RESOLVED: Council confirm the membership of the Moreton-in-Marsh Working Group, including the Moreton Business Association and approve the updated Working Group Terms of Reference. (Resolution)		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	27
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

71 Community Governance Review - Upper Rissington

The purpose of the report was for Council to approve and adopt the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joe Harris, proposed the recommendations to Council and stated that they had received a request from Upper Rissington Parish Council regarding a skate park located in the neighbouring parish of Great Rissington. They explained that the request was to adjust the boundary so that the skate park would be within the correct parish. The speaker found this to be a reasonable request and noted that they were not aware of any objections from Great Rissington.

Councillor Maclean seconded the proposal and explained that Little Rissington Airfield had been created from three parish councils across two counties, with boundaries cutting across it. They noted that the Ministry of Defence had not considered these divisions when establishing Upper Rissington, which followed the original Air Force fence and extended into Great Rissington. The boundary around Upper Rissington had been drawn tightly to control development due to its exposed location and lack of services. While the area had grown significantly, the specific land in question contained only a skate park, and Councillor Maclean believed the proposed boundary change would have no long-term impact and was a logical adjustment.

Councillor Harris in summing up underlined that this was not a final decision but an agreement to go out and consult according to the Terms of Reference.

The recommendations, having been proposed and seconded, were put to the vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED: Council approve and adopt the Terms of Reference for consultation. (Resolution)		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Joe Harris, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	26
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Julia Judd	1
Carried		

72 Programme of Meetings for 2025/26

The purpose of the report was to invite Council to agree a programme of Council and committee meetings for the 2025/26 civic year.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Councillor Mike Evemy, proposed the schedule of meetings for the next municipal year June 2025 to May 2026. A request was also made to change the date of the February 2025 budget meeting, where the Council would set the budget and council tax, from 26 February 2025 to 24 February 2025 at 6.00 p.m. The change was proposed to give officers additional time to complete the council tax billing, as February was a short month.

The programme included a reduction in the number of Cabinet meetings to nine per year. This would allow the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to meet before each Cabinet meeting, and improve the Committee's ability to review Cabinet reports in advance of decisions being taken.

Further recommendations were also discussed, delegating authority to the Director of Governance and Development to make necessary meeting adjustments, as well as to set dates for training and briefing sessions. The Head of Democratic and Electoral Services was also assigned the responsibility of scheduling Performance and Appointments Committee meetings. The maintenance of the current meeting start times, as outlined in paragraph 5.1 of the report was also brought to the Members' attention.

In discussion it was noted that:

- The February 2026 budget Council meeting had also been moved forward from a Wednesday to a Monday to give officers additional time to complete the council tax billing.
- The impact of the revised Cabinet cycle on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was welcomed.
- It was suggested that parish councils should be notified to town and parish councils to assist them in planning their own meetings.

Councillor Mike Evely summed up and clarified that the meeting times would also be rolled forward as no alternatives had been presented.

The recommendations, having been proposed by Councillor Mike Evely and seconded by Councillor Tom Stowe, were put to the vote and agreed by Council.

Did not vote: Councillor Joe Harris.

RESOLVED: Council agreed to

- 1. Move the date of the next budget meeting from Wednesday 26 February 2025 to Monday 24 February 2025 at 6.00pm,**
- 2. Approve the programme of meetings for 2025/26 as set out in Annexes A and B**
- 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer), in consultation with Group Leaders, to make changes to the programme of meetings in the event that there is any future decision of Council to change the committee structure or committee remits that impacts the programme of meetings.**
- 4. Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Business Manager to set the meeting dates for the Performance and Appointments Committee.**
- 5. Delegate Authority to the Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer) to set dates for member training and briefing sessions, any working groups established by the Council and any meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee (Licensing Act 2003 Matters) and the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee (if required)**
- 6. Agree that in light of no alternative proposals Council agrees that meeting start times will be rolled forwards from 2024/2025 (Resolution)**

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Every, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Andrew Maclean, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson and Tristan Wilkinson	25
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Len Wilkins	1
Carried		

73 Notice of Motions

No motions were received for consideration.

74 Next meeting

The Chair highlighted that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 24 February 2025.

Meeting closed 6:00 pm