COTSWOLD
District Council

Council
18/March2026

Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 18 March 2026

Members present:

Mark Harris (Chair)	Ray Brassington (Vice-Chair)	
Claire Bloomer	Laura Hall-Wilson	Andrea Pellegram
Nick Bridges	Joe Harris	Tony Slater
Patrick Coleman	Paul Hodgkinson	Lisa Spivey
Daryl Corps	Angus Jenkinson	Tom Stowe
David Cunningham	Julia Judd	Jeremy Theyer
Tony Dale	Juliet Layton	Craig Thurling
Paul Evans	Helene Mansilla	Clare Turner
Mike Evemy	Mike McKeown	Ian Watson
David Fowles	Dilys Neill	Len Wilkins

Officers present:

Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer
Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services
Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)
Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer
Nickie Mackenzie-Daste, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tyler Jardine, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer
Matt Abbott, Head of Communications
Emma Cathcart, Head of Service, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit

84 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Gina Blomefield, Councillor Nikki Ind, Councillor Michael Vann, Councillor Jon Wareing and Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

85 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made by Members in relation to any items on the agenda.

86 Minutes

Council considered the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 February2026.

Councillor Evemy proposed the approval of the minutes. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Stowe, put to the vote and agreed by Council.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Full Council 23 February 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Voting record:
23 For, 0 Against, 3 Abstentions.
Councillor Daryl Corps and Councillor Jeremy Theyer did not vote.

To APPROVE the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 February2026 (Resolution)		
RESOLVED that the minutes of Full Council 23 February 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.		
For	Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	23
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	David Cunningham, Paul Evans and Andrea Pellegram	3
Carried		

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87 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive

The Chair welcomed the newly elected Councillor for The Beeches, Councillor Paul Evans, and congratulated him on securing over 50 per cent of the vote, expressing confidence in his future contribution to the Council.

The Chair also extended congratulations to Emma Cathcart, Assistant Director of the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, on being awarded Female Pioneer of the Year at the Public Sector Counter Fraud Awards, in recognition of her outstanding leadership and innovation in local government.

The Chair also recognised the achievement of Helen Martin, Director of Communities and Place, who had been named one of the Women of Influence for 2026 by the Royal Town Planning Institute's official magazine, acknowledging her significant impact within the planning profession and her leadership in shaping inclusive, resilient and vibrant communities. Members joined in congratulating her on this well-deserved recognition.

The Chair reported having recently attended as a judge at the ORACY Primary Schools public speaking competition ("Look Who's Talking"), a county-wide initiative supporting the development of oracy skills among primary-aged children, and noted the high standard of participation and the wide range of topics presented.

Best wishes were extended by the Chair to Kira Thompson of the Democratic Services and Elections Team on the occasion of her maternity leave.

The Chair advised that the Council was currently advertising for the post of Head of Democratic and Electoral Services. Members were reminded that Andrew Brown had been undertaking the role on a shared basis with West Oxfordshire District Council, which had indicated its intention to retain him on a full-time basis. It was anticipated that transitional support during the recruitment period would be provided, with arrangements to be finalised.

As this was likely to be the final meeting at which Andrew Brown would be present in this capacity, the Chair invited Members to place on record their sincere thanks and appreciation for his valuable contribution and service.

The Chair then invited the Leader of the Council to make any announcements.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Evemy, reported that he had five brief updates for Members.

He congratulated Councillor Paul Evans on his electoral victory, noting that the Council's administration had increased its representation to 22 members, the largest it had been, and expressed his satisfaction at the continued vote of confidence in the administration.

The Leader provided an update on local government reorganisation, noting ongoing work led by the Chief Executive and regular meetings of council leaders. He encouraged Members and residents to participate in the Government consultation on proposals for the future structure of local government in Gloucestershire, ahead of the closing date of 26 March. He also advised that two identical all-member briefing sessions on LGR would be held on 14 and 17 April 2026.

The Leader referred to a recent Government announcement regarding a £27 million support scheme for lower-income households reliant on heating oil, to be delivered through a new Crisis and Resilience Fund from 1 August 2026. He noted that, as a rural district, the area was likely to have a higher proportion of affected residents. Funding would be allocated to upper-tier authorities, with Gloucestershire County Council responsible for distribution, and local officers would work collaboratively to support delivery, although further detail was awaited.

The Leader provided an update on the Local Plan, advising that a summary of consultation responses—comprising over 3,500 individual comments from more than 2,000 respondents—was due to be published imminently.

Finally, the Leader updated Members on discussions regarding devolution and the Government's proposals for "foundation strategic authorities." He noted that Gloucestershire leaders, supported by their Chief Executives, had been considering available options following correspondence from Government. He expressed his support, and that of his administration, for the approach led by Gloucestershire County Council to pursue membership of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) as a long-term objective, alongside the submission of an expression of interest for a county-wide foundation strategic authority.

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive Officer.

88 Unsung Heroes Awards

The Chair announced the Unsung Heroes Awards in the over 25 category for March 2026.

Rachel and Arthur Cunynghame were jointly recognised for their many years of dedicated and largely unrecognised voluntary service in the Chipping Campden area. Working in partnership, they were commended for providing vital support within a rural community where access to services could be limited, and for the significant and positive impact of their commitment and generosity.

Jayne Davies was recognised for her outstanding contribution to the community through her voluntary work supporting vulnerable young people, including mentoring and involvement in wellbeing initiatives. She was further commended for her creativity and dedication in raising funds to support these services, and for her selfless approach and commitment to helping others.

Tony King was recognised for his exceptional voluntary service as a First Responder and for his leadership of the Cirencester group. His willingness to respond to call-outs across Gloucestershire and Swindon at all hours, providing reassurance and potentially life-saving assistance, was acknowledged. It was noted that he was unable to attend the meeting and would receive his award by post.

At the conclusion of the item, the Chair invited those recipients in attendance to come forward to receive their certificates and lapel badges.

89 Public Questions

The Chair asked for any public questions and Ms Mary Cobbett was invited to address the Council to follow up on questions raised at the previous meeting. She expressed her appreciation for the support provided by Democratic Services and reiterated her concern regarding pensioners living solely on the state pension who may be adversely affected by recent financial changes, including increased tax liabilities and reductions in benefits. She emphasised the importance of identifying and supporting this group, particularly those not in receipt of Pension Credit, and highlighted the potential impact on their financial circumstances. Reference was also made to wider national concerns regarding similar households and the need for appropriate targeting of support schemes.

Ms Cobbett asked the following questions:

1. The number of pensioners in the Cotswold District who are living on the state pension and currently receiving Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.
2. The number of people in the District in receipt of state pension and whether the Council was writing to these residents to advise them to contact the Council upon receipt of updated tax bills, in order that their benefits could be reassessed and adjusted where appropriate.

In response to the concerns raised by Ms Cobbett, the Leader, Councillor Mike Evemy acknowledged the concerns regarding pensioners living solely on state pensions and their eligibility for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. He emphasised that the LIFT programme would continue to support eligible residents and that officers would take urgent steps to prioritise communications and ensure residents were informed

A letter providing a full response to Ms Cobbett’s questions confirming these actions would be issued by the Leader once the information had been compiled and the process finalised.

90 Member Questions

Councillor Claire Bloomer arrived at 2.25 pm.

Councillors’ written questions, written responses, supplementary questions and supplementary responses can be found in Annex A attached.

Council
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91 Constitution Working Group recommendations

The purpose of the report was to present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group arising from meetings on 7 October 2025 and 13 February 2026 regarding: disclosable interests; Standards Hearing Sub-Committee procedure rules; and committee membership.

The Leader, Councillor Mike Evemy, introduced the item and advised that the Constitution Working Group had presented three recommendations to Council.

1. The Group proposed strengthening the planning protocol regarding disclosure of interests, with the suggested amendments set out in Annex A.
2. The Group also recommended that improvements to the operation of standards hearings were carried out, reflecting lessons learned from the recent hearing in November, as detailed in Annex B.
3. The Group also recommended amending the constitution to allow both the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council to serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee simultaneously, noting that the previous restriction appeared historical and unnecessary.

Councillor Evemy asked Council to consider and approve the recommendations of the Constitution Working Group.

The Chair asked whether there were any questions for clarity.

Councillor Len Wilkins sought clarification on the process for multiple complainants speaking at standards hearings, referring to the procedure outlined at section 3.3 (page 49) of the papers, which stated that complainants should consolidate their concerns through a single speaker.

The Monitoring Officer, Angela Claridge, explained that for any future hearings, arrangements would be made in advance to identify the nominated speaker(s) and to clarify the questions to be raised. This process was intended to ensure that multiple complainants could coordinate their representation and avoid the issues experienced at the November hearing.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor David Fowles who expressed support for the changes proposed.

There was no debate on the matter.

The proposer, Councillor Mike Evemy was invited to sum up, but felt the matter had been adequately covered.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution which was proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor David Fowles.

Voting record:
27 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.
Did not vote Councillor Angus Jenkinson and Councillor Nick Bridges.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">To APPROVE the Constitution Working Group recommendations (Resolution)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Council RESOLVED to:
1. AGREE to amend the Planning Protocol to include the new paragraphs drafted by the Head of Legal Services about the declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests, as shown in Annex A.
2. AGREE to amend the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee Procedure Rules following a review, as shown in Annex B.
3. AGREE to amend Article 5 to remove the rule that says the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council cannot both serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee.</td></tr>
<tr><td>For</td><td>Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins</td><td>27</td></tr>
<tr><td>Against</td><td>None</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conflict Of Interests</td><td>None</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Abstain</td><td>None</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Carried</td></tr>
</table>

92 Review of political proportionalities on committees

The purpose of the report was to review political proportionality following the outcome of two recent by-elections and the ensuing change in the political balance of the Council. Following the by-elections in The Rissingtons and The Beeches wards the Liberal Democrat Group now had 22 members, and the Leader had requested a review of the political proportionalities on committee to reflect this.

The Leader, Councillor Mike Evemy, introduced the report, supported by Annex A, which set out the revised proportionality and explained the allocation methodology. It was noted that the Council operated five committees: Overview and Scrutiny, Planning and Licensing, Audit and Governance, Performance and Appointments, and Appeals.

Officers had recalculated allocations based on the updated composition; the Council now comprised two political groups, Liberal Democrat and Conservative, with two non-aligned members. Councillor Mike Evemy proposed the recommendations to Council and confirmed that one of the non-aligned members, Councillor Claire Turner, would continue on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the second non-aligned member, Councillor Nikki Ind would join the Planning and Licensing Committee, having previously sat on the Performance and Appointments Committee
.
The following members were nominated to vacant committee seats:

- Audit and Governance Committee: Councillor Craig Thurling;
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Paul Evans (replacing Councillor Nick Bridges);
- Performance and Appointments Committee: Councillor Tony Dale;
- Appeals Committee: Councillor Mark Harris (replacing Councillor Tony Dale).

There were no questions for clarity

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton who had nothing further to add.

There was no debate on the matter.

The Chair invited Councillor Evemy to sum up.

Councillor Evemy clarified that the proposal included two changes as well as two proposals to fill existing vacant seats on Committees.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution which was proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

<u>Voting record:</u>
28 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.
Councillor Julia Judd did not vote.

To AGREE political proportionalities and appoint to vacant seats on committees (Resolution)		
Council RESOLVED to: 1. Agree the political proportionalities as set out in Annex A. 2. Appoint to any vacant seats on committees in accordance with the wishes of the political group to which the seat has been allocated, as expressed at the meeting		
For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy	28

	Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

93 Appointment of Independent Members to the Audit and Governance Committee

Councillor Helene Mansilla, Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, introduced the item and provided an overview of the report, explaining that the item concerned the appointment of independent members to the Audit and Governance Committee. It was noted that two independent members had been in place since September 2020–23 and that their external expertise had strengthened the Committee's oversight over financial and non-financial matters. Councillor Mansilla acknowledged the recent resignation of John Chesshire, recording thanks for his contribution, and proposed the appointment of Nick Craxton as his replacement. Councillor Mansilla also proposed extending the tenure of the other independent member, Christopher Bass, until 31 March 2028, aligning with the abolition of the Cotswold District Council.

The Chair invited questions for clarity. Members raised queries regarding the experience of Nick Craxton and the processes followed during the recruitment exercise. Members noted that while Mr Craxton had previously been involved in independent panels, further details on his suitability for the Audit and Governance Committee could be provided. Clarification was also sought on whether independent members had opportunities to meet collectively for support and guidance. Angela Claridge confirmed that there was a thorough recruitment process and provided information on existing collaborative support structures for independent members.

The Chair then sought a seconder for the proposal. Councillor Len Wilkins seconded the proposal and spoke in support, noting confidence in Nick Craxton's suitability based on prior engagement.

The Chair moved to the debate. During the debate, members expressed general support for the recommendation while highlighting the importance of future opportunities to engage directly with candidates. No objections to the proposal were raised, and there was no extended debate.

The Chair invited the proposer, Councillor Helene Mansilla, to sum up. Councillor Mansilla reaffirmed the recommendations and thanked members for their comments.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution, which was proposed by Councillor Helene Mansilla and seconded by Councillor Len Wilkins.

<u>Voting record:</u>
28 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention.

To APPROVE the appointment of Independent Members to the Audit and Governance Committee (Resolution)		
Council RESOLVED to: 1. Appoint Nick Craxton to the Council's Audit & Governance Committee commencing immediately, until 31 March 2028 2. Extend Christopher Bass' appointment to the Council's Audit & Governance Committee until 31 March 2028.		
For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	28
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Jeremy Theyer	1
Carried		

94 Community Governance Review

Councillor Mike Evemy, Leader of the Council, introduced the item, reminding members that Council had agreed to undertake a community governance review in November in response to requests from a number of parish and town councils. He explained that the report before members summarised the consultation outcomes, feedback from ward members, and recommendations for council decisions.

Councillor Evemy outlined the recommendations:

- Cirencester and Preston/Siddington boundaries – No changes were proposed. While differences of opinion existed between Cirencester Town Council and the relevant parish councils, consultation responses indicated that residents in the affected areas preferred to remain in their current parishes. The report concluded that boundary changes at this time were premature, noting pending strategic developments.

- Cutsdean Parish Council – The proposal to become a parish meeting was supported, with the change scheduled to take effect no later than 1 October 2026.
- Fairford Town Council – The request to increase councillor numbers was supported.
- Moreton-in-Marsh – No boundary changes were proposed, as any adjustment was considered premature.
- Southrop Parish Council – The proposal to increase councillor numbers was supported.
- Tetbury Town Council – The proposal to establish wards was supported by the town council and reflected the majority consultation preference.

The Chair invited questions for clarity. Councillor Len Wilkins sought confirmation on whether the Cutsdean changes could take effect sooner due to operational challenges. Councillor Evemy confirmed awareness of the October 2026 timeline, and that the change would come into effect no later than the 1st of October2026 once all the legal requirements had been put in place. Councillor David Fowles commented on the active role of Southrop Parish Council and sought clarification regarding the loss of precept powers when a parish council becomes a parish meeting, the loss of precept was confirmed by officers. Councillor Patrick Coleman raised a query regarding population versus electorate numbers for Fairford and Southrop, which officers agreed to clarify post-meeting. Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson requested a good communications approach to ensure residents understood the changes, which Councillor Evemy confirmed would be coordinated with Tetbury Town Council and officers.

Several members expressed views during the debate:

Councillor Joe Harris emphasised the long-standing resident preference for Siddington residents to remain within their parish, reflecting community pride.
Councillor Ian Watson and Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson supported clear communications for affected residents, particularly in Tetbury.
Councillor Patrick Coleman and Councillor Helene Mansilla endorsed the recommendations for Fairford and Moreton-in-Marsh, noting alignment with council guidance on size and representation.
Councillor Paul Evans welcomed the decision to respect residents' wishes in Siddington and requested clarification of consultation responses, which Councillor Evemy provided in the summing-up.

Councillor Juliet Layton seconded the proposal, expressing support for residents' views in Siddington.

At the Chair's invitation, Councillor Mike Evemy summed up, confirming that 90 consultation responses had been received regarding Siddington, with the majority expressing a desire to remain in Siddington. He noted that Fairford and Moreton-in-

Marsh had declined warding proposals, while Tetbury's warding arrangement was supported for better local representation. The recommendations regarding the status quo for Cirencester, Preston, and Siddington, as well as other proposed changes, were confirmed as appropriate.

The Chair moved to the vote on the resolution, which was proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

Voting Record:
29 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">To APPROVE the recommendations of the Community Governance Review: (Resolution)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Council RESOLVED to:
1. Approve the final recommendations in relation to the Community Governance Review for Cirencester, Cutsdean, Fairford, Moreton-in-Marsh, Southrop, Tetbury, as set out in the table at para. 5.1.
2. Authorise the Head of Legal Services to make a Reorganisation of Community Governance order to implement the changes agreed by Council.</td></tr>
<tr><td>For</td><td>Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins</td><td>29</td></tr>
<tr><td>Against</td><td>None</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conflict Of Interests</td><td>None</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Abstain</td><td>None</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Carried</td></tr>
</table>

95 Change to Full Council meeting date

Councillor Mike Evemy introduced the item and explained that the proposal was to change the date of the Extraordinary Full Council meeting from 17 June to 12 August at 6:00 pm. He advised that this change was requested to allow additional time for officers to complete work on the Local Plan following the Regulation 18 consultation, which had received over 2,000 responses and approximately 200 new site submissions. Councillor Evemy emphasised that the additional time would enable officers to prepare a robust plan for Regulation 19 consultation and for submission to the Planning

Inspectorate, with the aim of achieving a sound Local Plan by 2027. He acknowledged the inconvenience of an August meeting but stressed the importance of ensuring the plan was robust and deliverable within statutory timeframes.

Councillor Mark Harris, in the Chair, asked whether the date change was requested by officers. Councillor Evemy confirmed that officers had advised the Council that additional time was needed to give the Local Plan the best chance of being found sound, and that the proposed date change would accommodate this without impacting the overall consultation timeline.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions for clarity. There were no additional questions.

The Chair sought a seconder for the proposal. Councillor Juliet Layton seconded the proposal and reserved the right to speak.

The Chair moved to the debate, no debate ensued.
Councillor Layton, who had reserved her right to speak then spoke in support of the recommendations, emphasising the need to follow officers' advice and ensure the Local Plan was robust for Regulation 19 consultation and subsequent inspection. Councillor Layton highlighted the importance of giving officers sufficient time to meet deadlines and ensure the plan contained all necessary material for consultation and inspection.

The Chair invited the proposer, Councillor Mike Evemy, to sum up. Councillor Evemy reiterated that the proposed date change was intended to give officers sufficient time to prepare the plan, maximise the chances of it being found sound, and ensure timely consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate before Christmas. Councillor Evemy also noted that the proposed August meeting would still allow the Regulation 19 consultation to commence in the summer and run into September and October, providing ample opportunity for public engagement.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the resolution, which was proposed by Councillor Mike Evemy and seconded by Councillor Juliet Layton.

<u>Voting record:</u>
28 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">To APPROVE a change to the June 17 Full Council meeting date (Resolution)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Council RESOLVED to:
1. Agree to move the date of 17 June 2026 Full Council meeting to 12 August 2026, at 6.00 pm.</td></tr>
<tr><td>For</td><td>Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Daryl</td><td>28</td></tr>
</table>

	Corps, David Cunningham, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Mark Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner, Ian Watson and Len Wilkins	
Against	Joe Harris	1
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

96 Notice of Motions

The Chair invited Councillor Angus Jenkinson to speak. Councillor Jenkinson proposed the motion on climate and ecological transformation in the Cotswold District and noted that the motion addressed serious and critical issues while remaining modest in scope, asking the Council to do what it could within its remit. Councillor Jenkinson highlighted that the Council had previously declared climate and ecological emergencies and emphasised the importance of considering these issues as the district moved towards a unitary authority structure.

He referred to a recent government report, released under the Freedom of Information Act, which indicated that all ecosystems in the UK were on a trajectory toward failure. He stressed that agriculture and farming were central to addressing climate, ecological, and food security challenges and that the Council had an opportunity to support a resilient local food system. Councillor Jenkinson concluded his introduction by noting the rural nature of the district and the significance of the issues, urging the Council to consider actions that could make a meaningful difference locally and globally.

The motion requested that the Chief Executive explore practical measures the Council could take to support sustainable food and farming practices, strengthen short supply chains, and contribute to ecological transformation within the district.

The Chair moved to the debate. Councillor Juliet Layton noted that the district council had limited powers over farming practices and highlighted wider challenges in nature recovery and sustainable agriculture. She questioned the potential influence of a new unitary authority under local government reorganisation (LGR) on these issues, noting constraints such as the lack of local abattoirs and historical government policies that favoured intensive farming.

Councillor Angus Jenkinson responded that while statutory powers were limited, the Council could leverage convening and influence to support sustainable farming. He cited examples from advisory groups, catchment partnerships, and initiatives in Wales demonstrating the impact of coordinated action on food sourcing and health outcomes. He also emphasised the importance of cultural change and the wider food chain in achieving sustainable outcomes.

Councillor Claire Bloomer suggested closer collaboration with town and parish councils, which manage allotments and local food projects, to engage communities in sustainable practices. Councillor Laura Hall-Wilson queried the level of consultation with farmers and farming organisations in preparing the motion. Councillor Jenkinson explained that the motion was informed by broad engagement with advisory groups, DEFRA, catchment partnerships, and conferences, reflecting widespread farmer perspectives.

Other members raised points on historical and regenerative farming practices, with Councillor Jenkinson noting correspondence with MPs and party leadership to advocate for greater recognition of food and farming in policy.

Councillor Mike McKeown spoke as seconder of the motion and noted that the Council had focused on supporting residents and businesses in reducing emissions through measures such as energy retrofitting, solar installation, and EV charging infrastructure. He emphasised that similar support should be extended to the agricultural sector, highlighting the importance of including food and farming in the planning of the new unitary authority under Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Councillor Mike McKeown stated that climate action required ongoing attention and that coordinated support could help farmers overcome economic and practical challenges. He cited a local example where the Council had collaborated with landowners and developers to address flooding, demonstrating the Council's ability to achieve practical outcomes. Councillor McKeown concluded that the motion aimed to ensure farmers and landowners were engaged, that the LGR programme included food and farming as a key track, and that collaboration with organisations such as Climate Leadership Gloucestershire would support effective implementation.

During the debate, members expressed broad support for the motion while noting that the council's role was primarily one of facilitation and influence, rather than direct delivery of farming initiatives. Several councillors highlighted that, although agriculture was not a statutory responsibility, the Council could act under the general power of competence to support local farmers, champion sustainable practices, and influence wider climate and ecological outcomes.

Members referenced the Council's previous initiatives in energy retrofitting, electric vehicle infrastructure, and community engagement as examples of how local action could achieve meaningful impact, emphasising that similar approaches could be extended to the agricultural sector. Councillors also noted the economic and environmental challenges facing farmers, including changing markets, climate impacts, and the need for access to advice, support, and collaborative opportunities.

Some speakers cautioned that competing priorities and the ongoing local government reorganisation presented practical constraints, and stressed the importance of early planning, engagement with farmers, landowners, and academic experts, and collaboration with organisations such as Climate Leadership Gloucestershire to ensure effective implementation. It was noted that embedding food and farming within climate and ecological strategies could support public health, food security, local economic resilience, and sustainable land use, and that the creation of a new unitary authority presented a unique opportunity to plan for these issues strategically.

The debate concluded with agreement that the motion would help ensure food and farming were considered in the planning and future operations of the new council, with clarity on leadership, priorities, and potential partners, while engaging the local farming community in shaping decisions that affect them.

The Chair invited Councillor Jenkinson to sum up.

In summing up, the proposer thanked members for their support and acknowledged the contribution of farmers and local stakeholders who had informed the motion. Councillor Jenkinson highlighted the potential of agriculture to mitigate climate change, including natural flood management, soil carbon capture, and improving food and health outcomes, noting the urgency of embedding these considerations into the planning of the new unitary authority. He also emphasised that the motion sought to use the Council's existing powers and competencies to influence outcomes and engage partners effectively. The proposer concluded by urging members to support the motion, stressing that timely action could make a meaningful difference for the local community, the agricultural sector, and the wider environment.

The Chair then moved to the vote on the motion proposed by Councillor Angus Jenkinson and seconded by Councillor Mike McKeown.

Voting record:
20 For, 0 Against, 6 Abstentions.
Councillor David Cunningham, Councillor Julia Judd and Councillor Len Wilkins did not vote.

To APPROVE the recommendations of the Climate and Ecological Transformation in the Cotswold District and Gloucestershire Motion (Motion)
Recognising the significant potential of local agriculture to contribute positively to climate and ecological recovery, and the need for coordinated local and regional support to enable this,

Council RESOLVED to: 1. Request that the Chief Executive and the Leader propose the following when representing the Council on the work to prepare for local government reorganisation: a. That the LGR Programme formally adopts Food and Farming as an active element within its climate planning work - whether as its own strand or as a sub strand as officers determine as most effective; and b. That the LGR Programme uses Climate Leadership Gloucestershire's Food and Farming track as a convening mechanism. 2. Request that the Chief Executive and the Leader report back to the July 2026 meeting of the Council with an update on the development of the Future Operating Model(s) of the new unitary council(s) and how Food and Farming is being considered within them and including the following: a. who will take ownership of it (political and officer leads), b. what the early priorities are, and c. which partners could be involved (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, catchment partnerships, Environment Agency, National Landscapes, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, National Farmers Union, and others as appropriate).		
For	Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Nick Bridges, Patrick Coleman, Tony Dale, Paul Evans, Mike Evemy, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Angus Jenkinson, Juliet Layton, Helene Mansilla, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Andrea Pellegram, Lisa Spivey, Craig Thurling, Clare Turner and Ian Watson	20
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Daryl Corps, David Fowles, Laura Hall-Wilson, Tony Slater, Tom Stowe and Jeremy Theyer	6
Carried		

97 Next meeting

The next meeting of Full Council was confirmed as being on Monday 20 May at 6:00 pm. It was noted that this would be Annual Council.

The Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 4.46 pm

(END)