

Minutes of Elmore ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
held on Monday 19th May at 7 pm 2025
in Elmore Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors: Vice Chair Vince Meredith (VM), Mr E Watts (EW), Ms Alison Inwood (AI), Ms Zahra Sadry (ZS) Dorie Jones (Clerk)	
In Attendance: Mr Trevor Jones, Mr Chris Newell	
1. Apologies: Chair Matt Brandon Cllr Gill Oxley Cllr Steven Davies	
2. Chair's Annual Statement It's been a year of change at Elmore Parish Council, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped us navigate it. We've welcomed four new councillors over the past year, all of whom have stepped forward with enthusiasm and dedication to keep the council running smoothly. Their contribution has been vital and much appreciated. The Parish Council remains in a strong financial position. We've continued to support key areas in the village, including regular contributions to the Village Hall, verge cutting, and the maintenance of our defibrillators. Speaking of which, we're pleased to be offering defibrillator training in the coming weeks. If you're not on the village WhatsApp group and would like to attend, please contact Zahra—her details can be found on the back of The Bridge. You may have noticed some changes around the village too. Following the successful trial of the “leaning bin of Elmore” at one of our main laybys, we will soon be installing a new bin at Kenton Green. Small steps like this can make a real difference to the look and feel of our parish. As always, we're keen to hear from residents. If you have a suggestion for something the council could act on to improve or benefit Elmore, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us. And if you're interested in getting more involved in local matters, we'd love to hear from you—there's always room for more hands and fresh ideas. Thank you for your continued support. With best wishes, Matt Brandon Chairman, Elmore Parish Council	
3. Open Question Time No questions asked.	
4 Declaration of Member's interest in Agenda items. Both Ed Watts and Zahra Sadry opted out of any discussion about Planning issues related to them.	
5 Minutes of the Previous Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th May 2024 These were proposed as a true record by VM and seconded by EW	
6 Matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th May 2024 All items since May 2024 have been dealt with at subsequent Parish Council Meetings.	
7. County Councillors Report On May 1st I was re-elected as your County Councillor, but the wider results mean that I am no longer Leader of the County Council.	

Peter Bungard our CEO also retired on the 2nd May and we have appointed Jo Walker, currently CEO of North Somerset, who will start in May.

The good news is that your County Council is solvent, which is proving the exception and not the norm, and has passed a budget that sees investment of £53m in Adult and Children Services, as well as further investment in Highways. The County element of your Council Tax has increased by 5.99%. This is not an accident it is the result of hard work and attention to detail.

Highways have purchased new equipment and new systems, particularly “Fix my Street” which automate the reporting of potholes but also allows members of the public to track the progress of any resolution. Highways have also introduced “Find and fix” gangs as well as introducing the common sense policy of not only fixing the serious safety defect pothole but also those in close proximity that will need fixing shortly, known as “Pothole plus.” This has resulted in 90,000 potholes being fixed which is 10,000 more than last year, and twice the year before. We have also resurfaced over 100 miles of roads which is the correct long term solution to potholes and is part of our £100m additional investment in Highways.

On Climate Change the County has recently publish an update to its plan and is continuing an ambitious tree planting program having planted 500,000 trees. We have installed Solar Panels on Shire Hall, the Coroners Court and 6 schools with another 6 announced. Arle Court Transport Hub has been completed and we have secured £8m for Bus Improvements including Zero Emission Buses. This allows us to both improve the infrastructure but expand the Robin, dial a ride service.

Children’s Services have recently had an Inspection of our Care Leavers Program which was very positive and is evidence of their continued improvement.

Adult Social Care has had a CQC inspection, which is a new approach to inspection, and was found to be “Requires Improvement.” However there has been much progress since the Inspection last September and £57m announced for 3 new Care Homes that will focus on rehabilitation as well as accommodation for the elderly. This along with our focus on Tech Enabled Care will help people stay in their own homes which most people prefer.

The Government has asked all 2 Tier Councils to become a Unitary, and then to look to join a Combined Mayoral Authority with neighbouring Councils to oversee infrastructure development.

In a letter to the Minister Gloucestershire has outlined three options, a single Gloucestershire along the lines of the existing County Boundary (co-terminus with the Police and NHS,) a split into two Unitaries, East and West, which has a management overhead of £9m additional cost with no additional services. There has also been a suggestion of Greater Gloucester with a Doughnut around it, but it is difficult to see this progressing. These options will be submitted in more detail in

<p>November to the Minister who will then make a decision.</p> <p>On completion of this process there will then be the opportunity to create a Combined Mayoral Authority, which could be Worcestershire / Herefordshire, Oxfordshire / Swindon or join the existing West of England Combined Authority. This decision is in the future.</p> <p>This is the legacy handed over to the Liberal Democrats..</p> <p>If you have any questions on any of these topics or any other questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch at Stephen.davies2@gloucestershire.gov.uk or on 07802 595 307.</p>	
<p>8. District Councillors Report</p> <p>Local Plan</p> <p>We have now had a second response from the inspectors saying that they recommend that Stroud District Council withdraws the plan and this was in response to SDC pleading with them and making threats to the inspectors to try and push this flawed plan through. What happens next will be that councillors at SDC will most likely need to take a vote on if we should withdraw or refuse to withdraw. I am told by senior officers that the recommendation will be to refuse withdrawal so that the inspectors will have to provide SDC with a very detailed report on the Local Plan, what is good, what is bad and what needs more work on. This report is wanted by SDC so that it will help form the basis of the next Draft Local Plan. If we just withdraw the plan, we will not get that report. We are not sure yet when we will be taking that vote, but I suspect an extraordinary meeting will need to be held as our May meeting is an AGM where there is no other business.</p> <p>Rural England Prosperity Fund</p> <p>DEFRA have awarded Stroud District Council £120k for 2025/2026 and applications for this funding will be open again imminently so please do check out the website for more details on application criteria and deadlines.</p> <p>Elections</p> <p>There has not been much change from the last meeting as we were in the regulated period for the Gloucestershire County Council elections and we now find ourselves back in the regulated period again as the District Council have a By-Election in the Severn Ward on 11th June due to sad death of Labour Cllr Richard Maisey back in April.</p> <p>AGM</p> <p>Thursday 22nd May we have our Annual General Meeting at SDC where all committee chairs, vice-chair and seats get decided for the next civic year along with the new Leader of Council as Green Cllr Catherine Braun has stepped down and will most likely be replaced with Cllr Chloe Turner. There will be no public or member questions and no motions as this meeting is for limited amount of business.</p>	
<p>9 Finance: DJ emailed the spreadsheet information to the Council and published them on the website</p> <p>i) Review of Parish Precept 2025/2026 The Parish Precept has remained unchanged at £2,472.00 There are no plans to change anything for the following financial year. It was suggested that Matt would be asked to</p>	

<p>check with other local parishes what their plans may be.</p> <p>ii) Account and Audit 2024/2025 Following our internal Audit, this work is complete and ready for the Council to approve.</p> <p>iii) Forecast Expenditure 2025/2026. The forecast of expenditure remains roughly the same as for the previous Financial Year although there could be a further increase in Verge Cutting Costs.</p> <p>iv) Community Based projects. There are no planned projects at the moment.</p> <p>.</p>	
<p>10. Severn Voice Meeting Report and 6th August Meeting Plan for Elmore Parish Council to Host.</p> <p>A Flood Defence Group suggest that a Member from each Parish could feed in the feelings of their area. The Environment Agency said that there would be no extra funding put into Flood Defences in this area. A request for volunteers would be put the BRIDGE.</p> <p>The Verge Cutting Contract finances for 2026 will be subject to discussions between Highways and Severn Voice.</p> <p>The next Severn Voice Meeting will be held in Elmore Village Hall on 13th August 2025.</p>	
<p>11 Highways</p> <p>Fix My Street should be used to report Potholes on adopted highways. This includes the potholes leading up to Hockley from Haywicks Lane.</p> <p>VM reported that the new Bin was being installed on 30th May. Highways will do this without charge. SDC will empty it weekly.</p> <p>VM reported that Highway plan to clean out culverts where necessary.</p>	
<p>12 Defibrillator Management</p> <p>ZS has checked both defibrillators. Reported some difficulty opening the Elmore Back cabinet. VM offered Trevor his can of silicone spray to try on the key pad lock.</p> <p>It was agreed that TJ could buy some paint to improve the outside of the cabinet at Elmore Back. TJ suggested he would obtain some silicone spray with the necessary paint and give it to ZS for on-going maintenance</p> <p>Defibrillator Training Dates</p> <p>June 16th at 7 pm as been agreed and ZS will let the interested people know. This should be a 1 + session with St Johns' Ambulance are training. It is possible that that there will be no charge. However, we have available a grant from the 'Build Back Better Scheme' to cover it if there is a cost to pay.</p> <p>Fridge Magnets Decision</p> <p>It was agreed that 50 would be ordered. DJ to do this.</p>	
<p>13 Litter Picking Report Back</p> <p>All successful. Plan to repeat this later in the year. May be a good idea to include some Refreshments.</p>	
<p>14 Planning Update</p> <p>Hollow Farm has applied for a Certificate of Lawful Use, retrospectively. No comments to be made.</p> <p>Lake Street Cottage. Chris Newell submitted an application to SDC for a small extension to the front of the property. No comments to be made.</p>	

Elm Farm dog paddock application had gone to appeal. No comments to be made. Haywicks Lane Barn. SDC closed this case early June 2025 as they consider the guidelines had been met.	
15 External Services Alison will check grit bin supplies with Jenni Hobbs. Orders for each following winter are usually placed during the summer.	
16 Data Matt will work with the Councillors who need to establish access the Google Drive	MB
17 Assets Notice Boards OK for the moment. War Memorial – nothing to report.	
18 Parish Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website: Kept up to date. The Bridge: The 42nd Edition of The Bridge is due to come out at the end of May. Trevor Jones is continuing to edit this. Our thanks given to our willing volunteers to deliver to our doors. Thanks were offered and best wishes to Val Overton who has delivered the Bridge to Elmore Back since its first edition. She has now retired through ill health. Email: Addresses given to the Chairman to hold are kept strictly confidential to comply with Data Regulations Guidance. 	DJ TJ
19 Special Projects Investigate the idea of putting a notice on the River Bank reminding dog walkers to bag and take away dog fouling.	
20 Any Other Business Alison suggested looking into the cost of getting a notice for the River Bank area reminding Dog Walkers to bag and remove any dog mess. Mike Watts has asked if volunteers could be found to help with Church Yard Clearing and cutting grass. VM reported that he had been asked if a report of deaths for former Elmore residents could be posted in the Bridge. It was recalled that we used to publish Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths at Elmore Church. This was abandoned because of Data Protection Laws. However, if a family request a notice to go into the Bridge, that should be possible.	
Date of the Next Annual Parish Meeting – Date to be arranged in May 2026	
The Chairman thanked those present for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.30 pm.	