

BAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 19th MAY 2025 @ 6.30 P.M.

In the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Baunton

Present:

Cllr. Peter Davies - Chairman
Cllr. John Milner
Cllr. Adrian Potter
Cllr. Peter Moran
Cllr. Alan Rees
Cllr. Dave Walton
Cllr. Marie Whiteman – Clerk

Cllr. Paul Hodgkinson – CDC
Cllr. Mark Harris - GCC

The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for nominations for the role of Chairman.

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr. Peter Davies was elected as Chairman, nominated by Cllr. Peter Moran and seconded by Cllr. Dave Walton.

2. Election of Vice-chairman

Cllr. Alan Rees was elected as Vice-Chairman nominated by Cllr. Dave Walton and seconded by Cllr. Marie Whiteman.

3. Report from Cllr. Paul Hodgkinson – CDC Ward Councillor and Cllr. Mark Harris - GCC Councillor

Cllr. Harris was elected to represent the Cirencester North and Ermin Division, which includes Baunton, to Gloucestershire County Council on the 1st May. The Chairman welcomed him to our AGM and congratulated him on his success. Cllr Harris introduced himself to the meeting. He has been a Cirencester Town Councillor and a Cotswold District Councillor for some time but this is his first time on Gloucestershire County Council. The Liberal Democrats won 27 of the 55 seats on GCC and will form a minority administration. They will be a Member led Council rather than an Officer led one as happened when the Lib Dems took over at CDC.

Cllr. Harris is meeting with Anne Johns, the Highways Manager at GCC to get up-to-date with the Highways contract. He said he has a lot to learn but to please email him with your concerns at mark.harris@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Highways – Please continue to use ‘Fix my Street’ on GCC Highways website to report potholes and other highways issues. The more people that report issues the more likely we are to get action. If you feel it’s an emergency call 08000 514514.

A417 missing link - The opening of the A417 missing link is on track to finish in 2027.

Flooding – A meeting will be arranged for the Churn Valley Parishes to discuss the flooding along the valley during the winter.

Local Government Reorganisation – We are now in a two tier system of local government. The Government has stated we must move to a Unitary Authority. The consultation process is ongoing. Gloucestershire are looking at two options:

1. A single Unitary Authority for the whole county
2. Two Unitary authorities: East Gloucestershire and West Gloucestershire. Cotswolds would be in the East along with Cheltenham and Tewksbury.

There will be a public consultation on the two options over the summer. Parish Councils and others can give their views on the options. Baunton Parish Council will discuss and feedback our views.

A final recommendation will be sent to the Government in December 2025. Government will then make a decision. The change is expected to be implemented in 2028.

Finance – Gloucestershire County Council like all councils is facing financial pressures. The budget for 2025/2026 is 665 million. Nearly one third of this is spent on Adult Social Care which puts a strain on the budget.

Three questions were asked:

The Noise Action Group for the A419/A417 - was there any progress on getting the surface redone? Cllr. Hodgkinson said sadly not. The life of the surface which was 30 years has been extended to 40 years which will take us to 2036, so nothing can be expected to be done before that.

Housing supply – were CDC any nearer to reaching the Government's target of 11,000 new homes in the Cotswold District? Cllr. Hodgkinson replied 'we don't have the land supply at the moment as most homes need to be built in larger settlements, i.e. Cirencester, Moreton, Bourton etc.'

Pot holes and grass cutting – Cllr. Milner met with Anne Johns, the Highways Manager to discuss the potholes problem. She said they were gravity led, obviously if they are very dangerous they will be repaired. Otherwise report them on 'Fix my Street'. The more times a pothole is reported the more chances we have of getting it repaired.

Cllr. Milner also asked Anne Johns about the grass on the Triangle approaching the Cheltenham Road. When it is long it obstructs the view of traffic coming from Cirencester especially when turning towards Cheltenham. Apparently there is a process where GCC could give us a licence to arrange to have it cut ourselves and they would help with funding it. We are still waiting to hear back from them.

Cllr. Dave Walton kindly cut back the grass around the edges two weeks ago so the view wasn't obstructed. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Walton on behalf of the Parish Council and residents.

Councillor Hodkinson left the meeting at 7p.m.

6 Responsible Finance Officer Report

Income

Precept - £2,050.

Town Council Grant - £753.75 – compensation for the loss of Precept when the properties on the North side of Baunton Lane were removed from our Parish and subsumed into the Town. This is the second of four annual payments.

Expenditure

Insurance - £263.66

AGM expenses - £30.25 – refreshments provided.

Capital Spend - £1,014 – replacement defibrillator, as the previous one was end of life and would no longer be supported.

Parish Church - £1,200 - £1k grant towards the upkeep of the Churchyard and £200 for use of the Church for the various meetings.

Cirencester Citizens Advice - £400.

Charitable donations - £400 – to the Cirencester Food Bank

The expenditure was slightly less than budgeted, as the Council didn't incur any Training, Stationery, Marketing or Maintenance costs this year.

The closing balance at the bank was £966.85.

The summary receipts and payments account will be published on our Website at Baunton.org.uk

As required of Local Councils the following documents were approved by Baunton Parish Council for 2024/2025.

Certificate of Exemption

Annual Governance Statement

Accounting Statements

The issue has again been raised by a resident about their concern that there is only a single signatory to the BPC bank account. The Responsible Finance Officer has this in hand and met with the resident after the meeting. In the meantime Cllr Potter will only transfer funds as agreed and minuted by the Council.

Action: Cllr. Potter to change the bank account and for the parish council to nominate a second signatory.

7. Chairman's Annual Report

The Chairman's Annual Report is attached at the end of the minutes.

Dates of meetings for 2025/2026

18th August 2025, 17th November 2025, 16th February 2026 and 18th May 2026

BAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's report – May 2025

This is my fourth report as Chairman of the Parish Council.

Since the last AGM on 20 May 2024, the Parish Council has held three ordinary meetings on 19 August, 25 November 2024 and 17 February 2025. We have discussed local issues with the Ward and County Councillors, and shared information from CDC, GCC and other statutory organisations. Minutes of the meetings and the accounts can be seen on our website at <https://baunton.org.uk>

Planning

During the past year the Parish Council has considered six planning applications and supported all of them, although one was later withdrawn. Cotswold District Council (CDC) has permitted the remaining four. The four permitted were for

- The erection of a rear extension and installation of roof lights at Fairlight Cottage
- School House, Baunton. Proposed work to repair property to pre-subsidence condition
- The demolition of conservatory and erection of single storey extension at 4 The Paddocks
- The demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings. Erection of self-build dwelling, garage and workshop at Baunton Rise, Cheltenham Rd
- The felling of a box tree at Mill Cottage

The one later withdrawn was for

- The erection of two storey extension connected by the glazed link. Conversion of outbuilding to gym/office with associated works at Sisters House on the Welsh Way

In addition, the Parish Council discussed a pre-notification for the extension of a building for agricultural machinery in the field at the end of Church Lane. We were not asked to comment on this but in any case the application was later withdrawn.

Elections

In the July 2024 General Election Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Conservative) was returned as the MP for the new constituency of North Cotswolds.

In the local elections at the start of May 2025 Mark Harris (Liberal Democrat) was elected to represent Cirencester North with Ermin as our Councillor on Gloucestershire County Council, replacing Joe Harris.

Baunton Social Committee

The Parish Council thanks Annie Perkins and the whole team at the Baunton Social Committee for their continued hard work and contribution to village life. The Committee continues to host monthly coffee mornings in the church, including the one earlier this month to mark the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. These events were well supported and successful.

As well as being a chance to socialise, these events raise funds for other activities in the village and for other charitable causes such as Macmillan cancer support. Other events included the ever-popular barbecue on 6th July in The Paddocks and lunch at the Golf Club and the annual boules tournament on the village green.

The Social Committee has also organised a village open gardens day on Saturday 24th May, from 2pm to 5pm, which we are looking forward to. Seven gardens have volunteered to open and entry will be by ticket from either one of two points: Maple Tree House (opposite the church) or 5 The Paddocks. Maps will be provided. It is intended to be a village social event rather than a challenge to Chelsea! As we do not have a public car park in the village invitations are limited to Baunton family and friends. Refreshments will be available to purchase at 5 The Paddocks, from 3pm onwards. All proceeds will go towards maintenance work within the Church.

There is a box in the church porch for donations to the foodbank and I'm happy to say this has been well supported. The foodbank are very grateful for the donations and hope you can continue to donate as the need is even greater at the moment.

Devolution

As part of the Government's reorganization of local government our local councils have been asked to put forward proposals to move to a single tier of local government in our area, replacing the current two tier system of Cotswold District and Gloucestershire County Councils. There will be a consultation on any proposals later this year.

The reorganization may lead to a change the roles and responsibilities of town and parish councils in meeting the needs of local people. There will be a meeting at the Royal Agricultural University on 4th June to discuss the issues, to which we will send representatives.

As a result of the likely changing role of the Parish Council we have decided it would be premature to update our Parish Plan now and will wait to see what the future scope of our responsibilities may be.

Bus shelter

The Parish Council was made aware of a Gloucestershire County Council fund for Parishes to apply for to fund local projects to improve life for local residents. The Parish Council considered whether the provision of a bus shelter on the Cheltenham Road (in the direction of Cirencester) might be of benefit to residents and carried out a consultation of residents. There were 11 responses in favour and two objections. The Parish Council decided to apply for funding, which may or may not be forthcoming. If funding is offered we will then make a decision as to whether to proceed. However, we have yet to hear back as to whether the application has been successful.

Defibrillator

The village defibrillator was purchased in 2014 and nearing the end of its useful life. The Parish Council took the decision to replace it with a more modern version with a longer life and cheaper running costs.

We would like to thank Councillor Adrian Potter for investigating the options and for arranging the purchase and installation of the new machine.

Potholes

Potholes continue to be a problem on the roads in the Parish and we encourage residents to report any they spot.

Some potholes in the village have been repaired but there remain others to fill. Thank you to Councillor John Milner and Roger Clarke for their continued pressure on Highways.

Flooding

Despite all of the rain we have had over the past year, fortunately no properties in the village were flooded.

The Parish Council discussed the continual flooding of the meadows and several gardens in Baunton, and the issue of the sluice gates in Cirencester at the November meeting. I then wrote to Cirencester Town Council requesting a meeting with them.

The CEO of the Town Council replied “We cannot legally, and do not, hold back water. In high level conditions we have to send water downstream and cannot back up water to prevent flooding in Cirencester. The sluice gates are operated in such a way that the flow of water can be managed when levels increase, to minimise the risk of flooding

Cirencester Town Council led on the convening of a waterways symposium earlier this year and has recently published a report. One of the recommendations in the report is to establish a ‘Cirencester and Churn Waterways and Environment Partnership’ comprising representatives from Cirencester Town Council, Cirencester Community Development Trust, Cotswold District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Environment Agency, Thames Water, FWAG, Cirencester Wildlife Group, Friends of Gumstool Brook, and representatives of land owners, Flood Wardens, and neighbouring parish areas.

Councillor Dave Walton attended the inaugural meeting of the Partnership on Wednesday 30th April. It was attended by about 30 people with a very diverse range of interests, ranging from individual flood victims to landowners (including our own Paul Amin) and representatives from environmental charities and Councils etc. and the MP for Cirencester.

The main purpose of the meeting was to get the group started and to hear what projects are already underway in the area that the Partnership covers.

He raised the issue of Baunton fields being flooded for several months each winter but it didn't seem likely that the group would be addressing the matter any time soon, and there was some slight tension with flood victims from Siddington who are desperate to not have any more water come their way when the river is high.

Cirencester Town Council has put £25K in the pot to help with future projects, and their Chief Exec asked Parish Councils to consider raising their precept to add to that sum. We will consider this in the autumn when we consider the budget for next year.

The Partnership will meet every 3 months, and their next meeting will be in September.

Village Green

Over three years ago we applied to register the Village Green under the Commons Act 2006 to protect the land for the use of future generations. After much correspondence with GCC, we finally heard last summer from GCC that the Commons Registration Authority has deemed that the land is not owned by anyone but is officially part of the public highway. This means it is not eligible for formal registration but it also means that the public has a right to use the land without permission and that nobody can develop it, which is all we were trying to achieve. We wrote to GCC asking whether they will now take responsibility for maintaining the village green as it is part of the highway, but have not had a response. We would like to thank David Bond for continuing to mow the village green and keeping it looking good.

Triangle at the top of the hill:

A discussion took place about the Triangle at the top of Baunton Hill, the grass needs cutting more often than Highways do it at the moment, as it presents a danger for drivers leaving the village that cannot always see approaching traffic. Cllr. Milner met with Highways last August and was told the Parish Council can be licenced to take over the grass cutting and benefit from some funding towards the cost. We are still waiting to hear from GCC if this is possible.

Councillor Dave Walton volunteered to cut back the grass on the triangle and has already done so this spring. We would like to thank him for taking this on.

Thank you

Finally, as always, thank you to everyone in the Parish. We have a close community of good neighbours who watch out for each other and take on roles and help organize events for our mutual benefit and this is much appreciated. Thank you.

Cllr. Peter Davies