

BAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 18th MAY 2026 @ 7.00 P.M.

In the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Baunton

Present:

Cllr. Peter Davies - Chairman
Cllr. Alan Rees - Vice-chairman
Cllr. John Milner
Cllr. Adrian Potter
Cllr. Peter Moran
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. John Milner and seconded by Cllr. Dave Walton.

2. Election of Vice-chairman

Cllr. Alan Rees was elected as Vice-chairman nominated by Cllr. John Milner seconded by Cllr. Adrian Potter.

3. Update from Cllr. Paul Hodgkinson – CDC Ward Councillor

Cllr. Hodgkinson is also on the Cabinet at GCC, his portfolio is Public Health, Libraries and the Fire Service. He came off the Cabinet at Cotswold District Council (CDC) and is now a “back bencher” and most importantly our ward councillor.

Housing target for CDC - The big challenge for CDC is the housing target the Government has set them. As most of the Cotswolds is protected all building will have to be concentrated in towns and larger settlements i.e. Cirencester, Moreton in Marsh, Fairford, Lechlade etc. The new Local Plan will be finalised early next year.

Unsung heroes Award - Cllr. Hodgkinson reminded us of the Unsung Heroes Award. If you would like to nominate someone in your community please follow the link <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/communities-and-leisure/the-unsung-heroes-awards/>

Local Government Reorganisation - most of what Cllr. Hodgkinson was going to say about the Local Government Reorganisation is covered in our Chairman’s Annual Report. He did add that

the decision for Gloucestershire is due in July 2026. New authorities will be operational by April 2028.

4 Update from Cllr. Mark Harris

Cllr. Harris has taken over the Highways portfolio at GCC from his son ex Cllr. Joe Harris who has resigned from both GCC and CDC. He is meeting with senior staff to bring himself up-to-date with the service.

A discussion took place about pot holes and whether we could fix our own. Cllr. Potter will check our insurance to see whether the Parish Council would be covered if a member of the parish fixed the potholes.

The Parish Council raised the issue of the triangle at the top of the hill with Cllr. Harris. The County Council have told us we are not allowed to cut the grass on the Triangle at the top of the hill due to its proximity to the A435. The area will continue to be cut in line with their grass cutting schedules for visibility at junctions and for the main cut of the year.

We are not happy with this as turning on to the A435 from the north fork towards Cheltenham when the grass is long is very difficult as visibility is impaired by the long grass. Cllr. Harris agreed to raise this with the appropriate officer.

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. If ‘fix my Street’ doesn’t work for you there is a form you can complete and send in. Cllr. Harris is going to send a copy to the Clerk.

Cllr. Harris reminded us of the Grassroots-neighbour fund. The link is below
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/grassroots-neighbourhood-fund/>

5 Responsible Finance Officer Report

Finance report for the year to 31st March 2026 for the AGM on 18th May

RECEIPTS Precept received: £1,800.00

Penultimate grant from Cirencester Town Council relating to the loss of precept for Baunton Lane North: £753.75

VAT recovered on purchase of Defibrillator: £169.00

PAYMENTS Insurance: £247.98

AGM expenses: £36.40

Marketing (Domain name provision): £143.71

Grants to Baunton Parochial Church Council: £1,200.00

Donations: Citizens Advice: £400.00

Cirencester Foodbank (now South Cotswold Foodbank): £400.00

Bank charges: £51.00

We started the year with £966.85 in the BPC account and ended the year with £1,210.51

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 2025/2026.

Certificate of Exemption
Annual Governance Statement
Accounting Statements

We would like to thank Trevor Trim for auditing the accounts for us.

7. Chairman's Annual Report

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

Dates of meetings for 2026/2027

10th August 2026, 16th November 2026, 15th February 2027 and 17th May 2027

BAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's report – May 2026

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

Since the last AGM on 19 May 2025, the Parish Council has held three ordinary meetings on 18 August, 24 November 2025 and 23 February 2026. 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 five planning applications and supported all of them. Cotswold District Council (CDC) has permitted three and decisions are awaited on the remaining two. Those permitted were:

- New gates with name plaques and lights plus the removal of swimming pool at Baunton Mill House
- The erection of a single-storey side extension at 1 Priors Court, Manor Farm. This was permitted following initial rejection and resubmission.
- The removal of a Robinia and coppicing of Birch tree at The Grain House.

Those awaiting decision are:

- The erection of a part single storey and part 1.5 storey detached self-build dwelling with attached car port at 5 Downs Way, Baunton.
- The removal of 2 existing caravans and erection of self-build rural worker's dwelling with associated works at Woodland Barn Farm on The Whiteway

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. These events were well supported and successful.

Last May the Social Committee organised a village open gardens day. Seven gardens were opened and refreshments were available to purchase at 5 The Paddocks. The event raised £468, which will go towards the maintenance of the church and our social space.

The Baunton Summer Barbecue was held at 3 The Paddock on 5th July and as always was a great success.

Other events included carols on the green on 19th December (having been rained off on 17th), boules on the Village Green on 24th August, a lunch at Cirencester Golf Club on 1st March and a walk from the village to the Bathurst Arms followed by lunch there on 16th May.

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.

There is a box in the church porch for donations to the foodbank. The foodbank are very grateful for the donations and hope you can continue to donate as the need is even greater at the moment.

Baunton Website

We have been recommended to move our Parish website from Baunton.org to Baunton.gov.uk in line with Government guidance. A working party, chaired by Peter Moran is considering the options and costs of doing so.

A working party consisting of Cllrs. Moran, Walton and Milner will look at the options and implement a plan to comply with the recommendation.

Defibrillator

The Parish Council asked for volunteers to paint the old phone box which houses the defibrillator. However, no offers were received and so the Parish Clerk has contacted professional painters for quotes.

Bus shelter

Last year I reported that Gloucestershire County Council had invited applications to a fund for Parishes for local projects and that, following consultation, the Parish Council had applied for funding for a bus shelter on the Cheltenham Road (in the direction of Cirencester). We subsequently discovered that our application had not been submitted by our GCC Councillor and so we had missed the deadline.

The parish council do not have sufficient funds available itself and so the provision of a new bus shelter is on hold pending any further grant schemes.

Triangle at the top of the hill:

The Parish Council has been concerned that about the Triangle at the top of Baunton Hill, where the grass needs cutting more often than Highways do it at the moment, as it presents a danger for drivers leaving the village who 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. However, since then we have been told that the Parish Council cannot be granted permission to cut the grass as it would represent a health and safety risk due to proximity to the A435.

Tree on the Village Green

It has been brought to the Parish Council's attention that the tree on the village green needs pruning. Councillor Milner has obtained a number of quotes.

The Parish Council would like to welcome Mr & Mrs Miller Pyott, who have moved into the Old Manor House (formerly owned by David Bond) and thank them for taking over the cutting of the grass on the village green. This is much appreciated.

Potholes

As always, 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 other to fill. Thank you to Councillor John Milner and Roger Clarke for their continued pressure on Highways.

Local Government reorganisation

As I reported last year our local councils were asked by Government 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.

Gloucestershire councils made a joint submission to the Government on 28th November.

Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold, Stroud and Tewkesbury District Councils favoured a single Unitary authority for the whole of Gloucestershire. Cheltenham Borough Council proposed a two Unitary authority solution splitting the county into East and West, while Gloucester City Council favoured a two Unitary solution with a Greater Gloucester council and the rest of Gloucestershire Unitary. The Forest of Dean did not support any reorganization.

The Government held a consultation on the options and the Parish Council responded, favouring the single Unitary proposal.

A decision by Government is expected in July.

The reorganization is likely to lead to a change the roles and responsibilities of town and parish councils in meeting the needs of local people

A key element of the Government's plans is the introduction of Neighbourhood Partnerships. These will bring together local councils, community organisations, and public services to make sure decisions reflect the needs of local people. The areas covered will usually include a town and surrounding villages, with populations between 20,000 and 50,000.

Parish Councillors attended two meetings during the year to discuss the possibilities. The first, last June was at the Royal Agricultural University and the second, organized by Cirencester Town Council was in March at Bingham House.

Cirencester Town Council may put itself forward to lead a partnership for the south Cotswolds area and is considering how it can best influence, support, or deliver services in areas such as:

- Public transport and local infrastructure
- Planning and development
- Health, skills and employment
- Highways improvements, maintenance and street cleaning
- Leisure and tourism
- Libraries and youth services
- Licensing
- Car parks and parking enforcement
- Museums, Parks and Public toilets

Cirencester Town Council believes it could benefit by taking on assets and services from CDC and GCC, such as street cleaning, highways maintenance, open spaces, museums and car parks, so generating new revenue from local assets such as car parks, to reduce Council Tax.

For Baunton Parish, it is difficult to see what the benefits of such a partnership might be as we have no GCC/CDC assets in the Parish that we could take over and the only possible service we could provide is licensing of the Church. Cirencester has a population one hundred times greater than that of Baunton and so it could be a very unequal partnership, but we will keep an open mind and continue to discuss options as plans develop.

Once the final shape of reorganization is clear we will also consider how to refresh our Parish Plan.

Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils

The Parish Council has now become a member of the GAPTC for which the fee is £100 a year.

Town and Parish Council Forum

Cllrs. John Milner and Adrian Potter attended the above forum last November.

The planning update related to the new government targets for new homes in our area. The vast majority of this is protected land in one way or another (National Landscape, etc.) so any new builds will have to be in and around existing 'settlements', i.e. Cirencester, Tewkesbury etc. The target set by the government is 18,650 new homes by 2043 but CDC currently has only c6,950 planned.

CDC had approached all landowners in the region to see what sites could be available and they outlined 7 scenarios for new builds, only one of which exceeded the new target, but would have involved creating new settlements and greatly extending existing ones. They opted for a scenario which would produce 14,660 houses, still short of the government target.

CDC subsequently asked Government to review the requirement given the amount of protected land in the District but the request was rejected.

Cirencester and Churn Waterways and Environmental Partnership meeting

Cllr. Dave Walton attended the first official meeting of the Partnership which around 40 people attended.

Dr Mike Jones, a local expert on hydrogeology, gave an overview of the rainfall, groundwater levels and Churn flow rates in recent years. 2024-25 had only the 35th most rainfall of the last 44 years (for which he had the full data), while 2023-24 had the highest amount of rainfall. However, there were no floods in 2023-24 in Cirencester, underlining the complexity of the situation. He believes that natural water storage in the Churn catchment is low, resulting in rapid response to wet and dry weather.

The meeting prioritised various options for future action, with the most popular choices being a start on some minor nature-based water retention projects in the upper Churn catchment and developing an overall nature-based solutions plan. There was virtually no support for any development of the Gloucester Road flood gates.

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