

MINUTES OF FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday 12th February 2024 at 7pm, Westerleigh Village Hall



MINUTES OF WESTERLEIGH & COALPIT HEATH FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday 12th February 2024 at 7pm, Westerleigh Village Hall

Present: Cllr Rob McCullough (Chair), Cllr J Lean (also ward cllr), Cllr C Goddard, Cllr K Kelliher, Cllr T Clark (also ward cllr), Cllr P King

Clerk: R Davis **Finance Officer:** S Simmons

One member of the public.

3617. To NOTE apologies for absence

Cllr C Echegaray. Ward Cllrs Marilyn Palmer and Claire Young.

Cllr A Hill was absent and did not send apologies.

3618. To RECEIVE Declarations of Interest relating to this meeting, as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members and the Localism Act 2011

Cllr Clark advised the Council that as he is a member of the South Gloucestershire Development Management Committee, that he is still permitted to speak and vote on planning items and issues and would only have to declare an interest if he had a pecuniary interest or an additional non-pecuniary interest (min3622). **Any contributions he makes are based upon the submitted documents available at this time and he retains an open mind should any application be subsequently referred to one of South Gloucestershire Council's planning committees for determination.**

3619. To APPROVE [Minutes](#) of Parish Council meeting held on 15th January 2024.

RESOLVED: The Minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

3620. To RECEIVE reports from South Gloucestershire Councillors on matters relating to the Parish
Monday 12th February 2024

Budget for 2024/25 Approved by Cabinet

South Gloucestershire Council's updated budget for 2024/25 and beyond has been published. A balanced budget has been reached for the next three financial years.

It contains additional investments in children's services and focusing on the twin priorities of cost-of-living support for those in financial difficulty and addressing the climate crisis. It was approved by Cabinet yesterday and will be put before Full Council for approval on Wednesday 21st February.

The new budget will increase Council Tax by 4.99%, of which 2% will be specifically used to help meet the ever-growing need for adult social care. In balancing the budget last year, a target to raise new revenues was set at around £2 million. Accordingly, the council will introduce a £10 administration charge to apply for a Blue Badge, which are valid for three years, in line with most other councils in England. The subscription cost for green bin/garden waste collection service will also rise, from £30 to £60, so that it is no longer subsidised by all council taxpayers. Again, this will bring South Gloucestershire into line with neighbouring authorities.

The latest plans follow an extensive public consultation process during the Autumn that saw residents and stakeholders submit more than 50,000 comments on the original draft proposals.

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The central aim of the budget, which must legally be balanced, is to ensure that residents in the greatest need are supported with the cost of living, while maintaining essential and statutory services and taking action to respond to the climate and nature emergencies.

Headline investments include:

- An additional £1,055,000 for Children's Services for 2024/25 to maintain and build on the progress made following the recent lifting of the Improvement Notice by Ofsted.
- Providing Free School Meal vouchers for one week at Easter and one week of Summer, helping approximately 6,500 young people.
- Debt and benefits advice to an additional 680 complex cases, bringing the total helped to approximately 2,000 people. This is anticipated to secure an additional £2.5m in financial outcomes for residents.
- A pilot scheme to help landlords reach current the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for their properties, protecting both renters and the environment. This will help renters save money as well as improving the environmental performance of more homes in the district.
- A pilot scheme to expand youth services, namely the Youth Activities Offer (YAO), providing some additional support to secondary schools and expanding the Education Inclusion Project (EIP).
- Energy efficiency measures such as radiator panels, draught proofing, LED lightbulbs, kettles, and slow cookers for eligible residents, which will again help address the cost of living and climate challenges facing residents across South Gloucestershire.
- Continued support for Community Welcome Spaces
- Continued support for food banks and community pantries
- 1,000 warm packs.

The council has chosen to prioritise support for those most in need of cost-of-living support because of current uncertainty over whether the Household Support Fund, which is worth £2.8m for South Gloucestershire, will be continued after March 2024. The Fund, and its previous iterations, has been used to provide a significant amount of the Council's cost-of-living support to date.

The financial settlement provided to the council from central government does mean that, in order to meet the £2 million income generation target set out in last year's budget, a scheme of car parking charges will need to be implemented, in line with most local authorities across the country. The details of this will be worked up over the coming weeks, with a phased implementation plan starting with council owned off-street car parks before progressing to on-street parking.

A scheme will be developed that balances the need for the council to balance the books with the needs of residents and businesses to maintain access to shopping facilities and footfall in local shops, for example. The specifics of these charges, for example where they will apply and how much they will be, are yet to be determined, but in light of community concerns about the potential impact of this, which was widely expressed in the consultation process, the scheme will include an element of free parking and the introduction of business permits where appropriate.

In order that these measures do not lead to drivers congesting local residential areas, there will also need to be new regulations to street parking in some areas to protect local residents, and a balance will be struck so that parking near to local shops is not blocked by all-day parking commuters.

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No new proposals to reduce services are included in this budget as the council continues to implement the existing savings programmes in the coming financial year and monitor its impact upon its delivery of services. From 2014/15 to 2023/24 the council will have made savings of £84 million and £101 million by 2026/27.

Cllr M Palmer - I contacted South Gloucestershire Council regarding the land clearance at the field opposite the Besom Lane junction in Westerleigh. The concerns raised have all been fully investigated and no breaches of planning have been identified. However, the owners have been instructed to remove the razor wire fencing, and the encroachment onto Highway/SGC land continues to be investigated. It is thought that the land is being tidied in preparation for sale rather than the immediate development/submission of a planning application.

3621. To RECEIVE questions and comments from members of the public present with respect to business on the agenda (in accordance with Standing Orders 3 e-3 i)

None.

3622. PLANNING

a) To NOTE planning comments submitted since last meeting

None.

b) To NOTE planning decisions made by South Gloucestershire Council since last meeting
NOTED. See Appendix 1.

c) To discuss and COMMENT on any necessary Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:

i) [P24/00244/HH](#) Demolition of detached garage to facilitate erection of wrap around extension and raising of roofline including front and rear dormers to accommodate living space in the roof. | Oakleigh Mays Hill Frampton Cotterell South Gloucestershire BS36 2NS

RESOLVED: Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council has no objection to this application.

ii) [P24/00261/F](#) | Raising of roofline and installation of doors and windows to agricultural building (retrospective). | Building Off Huckford Lane Winterbourne South Gloucestershire BS36 1AP

RESOLVED: Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council has no objection to this application.

FINANCE

3623. To APPROVE January 2024 payments made in accordance with FR 5.2.

RESOLVED: To approve January payments. No questions arising. See Appendix 2.

3624. To NOTE end of January 2024 Financial documents: Bank Statements & Reconciliation, receipts

NOTED with no questions arising.

3625. To RECEIVE update information in relation to Bitterwell Lake outflow works and take a DECISION on any required action

The work is progressing well. The 50% deposit was shown on the January payments list (Appendix 2). The additional work (and cost) to remove large amounts of old concrete dumped in the lake 11 years ago was explained. The preliminary additional cost of £3000 was considered high and the RFO has been asked to get a more detailed breakdown on this from Ivel.

RESOLVED: To APPROVE the payment of up to £3000 to Ivel Aquatics to remove and dispose of concrete from Bitterwell Lake, subject to confirmation from Ivel Aquatics to the Finance Officer of the cost breakdown.

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3626. To RECEIVE an update on pest control at Bitterwell Lake & Chalet and take a DECISION on proposed annual pest control contract

RESOLVED: The Council APPROVED the setting up of an annual contract at a cost of £800 with Venables Pest Control who have been very helpful with the rodent problem at the Lake/Chalet. The proposal is:

"My recommendation for a contract for the lake and surrounding buildings, this will be a cost of £800 a year. This allows for visits every 2 weeks, any call outs due to sightings will not be charged for. I will have secure baiting points around the lake, any active holes will be treated and I will cover wasp nests as well at no extra cost. Environmental assessments will be done monthly."

3627. To consider and APPROVE funding for any grant applications

(a) Citizens ADVICE South Glos £2000 request: **APPROVED** unanimously

(b) Coalpit Heath Village Hall (Miners Club) £670 for heat zoning controls: **APPROVED** unanimously

RESOLVED: Both these grants will be paid from Council reserves shown as GPoC funds (previously S137 funds)

3628. To NOTE the Clerk report on CPS contract meeting and possible future budget requirements

The RFO reported that following the Clerk's recent meeting with CPS (grass-cutting contractor) to discuss increased future usage of the Westerleigh Playing Field (WPF) football and cricket pitches, additional funds need to be allocated for pitch maintenance. For 2024/25 there is enough E&L budget flexibility to cover any need for goal mouth seeding and verti-drain drilling. Additional funding will need to be allocated during the next budgeting round (2025/26) however.

RESOLVED: (i) To set a start date of 1st August for use of the football pitch at WPF for pre-season fixtures. (ii) To APPROVE a verti-drain treatment of the football pitch to be completed in September 2024 by CPS (cost £300). (iii) To APPROVE reseeding of the goalmouths at WPF in April 2024 by CPS (cost £358).

3629. To APPROVE the appointment of an internal auditor for the 2023/2024 accounts & processes

RESOLVED: G Smith was APPROVED as the Internal Auditor for the 2023/2024 accounts and processes.

3630. To receive any other report from the RFO including:

Annual ICO/DP registration renewal

NOTED: £35 to be paid by Direct Debit (£5 discount) in March to the Information Commissioners' Office to cover GDPR & DP Act 2018 responsibilities.

The Finance Officer left the meeting.

3631. To RECEIVE Parish Councillor Reports – written submissions, taken as read with questions taken as necessary

None.

ITEMS REQUIRING A RESOLUTION

3632. To discuss the latest information from South Gloucestershire Council, respond to questions asked and APPROVE the revised proposal for the Ruffet Road junction and Kendleshire triangle (as part of the A432 active travel corridor project)

Cllr McCullough reported that South Gloucestershire Councillors Claire Young (ward cllr and Leader of the Council) and Chris Willmore (Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure) have offered to meet with parish councillors to discuss the corridor project in more detail, listen to the council's concerns and identify steps to consult on/ address resident concerns.

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In light of this development, Andy Whitehead (South Gloucestershire Council project lead for the corridor project), offered his apologies prior to the meeting and did not attend to answer questions on this item.

RESOLVED: The Clerk to arrange an evening meeting between parish councillors and South Gloucestershire Cllrs Claire Young and Chris Willmore to discuss the A432 corridor project prior to the March Parish Council meeting. To defer discussion of the item until the March meeting, following the meeting with South Gloucestershire councillors.

3633. To discuss matters and take a DECISION on required actions relating to road safety concerns/ safe crossing places at the following locations: Church Rd/ Badminton Rd bus stop, Henfield Rd, Beesmoor Rd

RESOLVED: i) The Clerk to contact South Gloucestershire Council StreetCare to request mud is swept from the road near the Church Road crossing. ii) Add the issue of safe crossing points at the junction of Church Road/ Badminton Road and at Henfield Road and Beesmoor Road (adjacent to junction with Badminton Road), to the agenda for the A432 corridor project meeting (see min 3632).

3634. To discuss matters and take a DECISION on required actions arising from A432 Badminton Rd bridge closure: (see report)

- (i) Speeding in Westerleigh

Westerleigh cllrs confirmed that police enforcement cameras have been operating on Shorthill Road and the community speedwatch group is now active in the village, monitoring speeding. Cllr King highlighted that parked vehicles on Shorthill Road are partially/ fully blocking the pavement and forcing pedestrians into the road. The Clerk will confirm whom to report this to and report accordingly.

- (ii) Speeding in Coalpit Heath –Henfield Rd, Ram Hill

The Clerk has received reports of speeding on Beesmoor Road. Cllr McCullough confirmed there is an ongoing problem with drivers using Ram Hill as a rat run at speed to avoid traffic queuing on Henfield Road at the approach to the traffic lights.

- (iii) Parking issues on Henfield Road

Ward Cllr Lean shared concerns raised by South Gloucestershire Council Highways officers in relation to the highways investigation scheme for waiting restrictions on Henfield Road (request submitted by the parish council in April 2022). Cllrs disagreed with the feedback. It was agreed that a site visit with Highways officers should be arranged.

In relation to the above issues, it was confirmed that South Gloucestershire Council has yet to confirm the date for a planned public consultation on managing the local impacts of the A432 bridge replacement project.

RESOLVED: i) The Clerk to request a site meeting with South Gloucestershire Council Highways officers to discuss their concerns with the highways investigation scheme for waiting restrictions on Henfield Road. (Copy in ward Cllr Lean).

ii) To raise all of the above issues via the public consultation on managing the local impacts of the A432 bridge replacement project, and at the meeting agreed at min 3632 as appropriate.

3635. To consider and APPROVE the following policies for adoption:

Document Retention Policy & Appendix

RESOLVED: To approve the Document Retention Policy & Appendix for adoption.

3636. To RECEIVE information from Clerk regarding ongoing matters and take a DECISION on required action

None.

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3637. To RECEIVE an update on issues at Bitterwell Lake Chalet and take a DECISION on required action

- (i) Rat problem - see min 3626.
- (ii) Render issue - The Clerk reported no response has been received to repeated requests for a render inspection, submitted to the Tingdene render team email address since September 2023. The email address is now out of use. The Clerk will immediately escalate the request to Tingdene customer services.

3638. To discuss any required CONSULTATIONS and COMMENT as necessary:

- (i) South Gloucestershire Local Plan Consultation – Available to view from 6th Dec [SCG consultation page https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/new-local-plan/](https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/new-local-plan/) Deadline 16th Feb 2024

The council discussed and then voted on two alternative draft responses, which would form the basis of its agreed consultation response. Once a vote had been taken, further discussion took place to finalise and agree the specific content of the response.

In summary, the first draft response proposed:

- Objecting to the emerging preferred strategy set out in the Local Plan consultation document, on the grounds that developing Green Belt land north of the M4 is unacceptable.
- Requesting that South Gloucestershire Council remove site BV13 - Land North of Lyde Green from the final version of the Local Plan, and reconsider inclusion of alternative development sites at Yate, Thornbury and/or villages (as set out in the three strategic lenses).

In summary, the second draft response proposed:

- Broadly accepting the emerging preferred strategy set out on the Local Plan consultation document.
- Objecting to the inclusion of site BV13 - Land North of Lyde Green.
- Requesting that South Gloucestershire Council consider one or more alternative sites within/ close to the parish which could be more suitable for development, subject to public consultation on those sites.
- Setting out a series of demands to mitigate the impact on the parish and protect the remaining Green Belt, should the BV13 site be included within the final version of the Local Plan.

Cllr Clark requested a recorded vote on the two draft responses.

RESOLVED: i) To accept the second proposed response (broadly accepting the emerging preferred strategy) as the basis for the council's response to the Local Plan consultation. ii) Following discussion of specific content, to approve the response to the Local Plan consultation attached at Appendix 3.

Recorded vote – unanimous in favour of the second proposed response. No abstentions.

ITEMS TO NOTE

3639. To NOTE feedback from South Gloucestershire Council Highways regarding provision of lamp post speeding signs – Park Lane

Noted that South Gloucestershire Council Highways are unable to grant permission for additional signage.

3640. Correspondence/Communication with Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council: From South Gloucestershire Council:

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Local Climate and Nature Action Plan Conference invitation – 22nd Feb 7-9pm @ Coalpit Heath Village Hall

PT.7856 Bell Road, Coalpit Heath - Temporary Road Closure: effective from 28th February 2024, 3 days

Footpath between Broad Lane and Frog Lane, Coalpit Heath- [Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order 2019 LWE84, operative from 29th June 2023](#)

Road closures/ speed limit changes due to A432 bridge replacement (effective from 15th Feb 2024 for 18 months

PT.7882 Westerleigh Road, Coalpit Heath - Temporary 30 mph Speed Limit

PT.7883 Road closures - Coalsack Lane, Ruffet Road, Cooks Lane - Henfield Area

PT.7881 A432 Badminton Road, Downend - Temporary Road Closure

Other received items

-On behalf of Places for People - Invitation to briefing on proposals for the Land North of Lyde Green development site (identified in the Local Plan consultation) – declined

-On behalf of RWE Renewables – notification of drop-in consultation event @ Westerleigh Village Hall, 20th Feb 3-7pm re proposals for solar farm and battery energy storage scheme near Westerleigh (will also present at next Parish Council meeting on 11th March)

3641. To NOTE items considered urgent by the Chairman

None.

3642. To CONSIDER any exempt items

None.

3643. Dates of future Parish council meetings

Mon 11 th March	Full Council	Henfield Hall, Ram Hill
Mon 25 th March	Finance & General Purposes Committee	Manor Hall, Red Brick Annex
Mon 8 th April	Full Council	Westerleigh Village Hall

(Full list at www.westerleighcoalpitheathparishcouncil.gov.uk/meeting-dates)

The meeting was closed at 9.00pm.

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Appendix 1 - Planning decisions since January 2024 Parish Council meeting

Description	Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council Comment submitted	Notice	Decision	Decision Date
i) P23/03457/F Installation of a new 97.2KWP solar PV system to roof Unit X Wellington Drive Yate South Gloucestershire BS37 5NZ	Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council has NO OBJECTION. (Delegated)	14/12/2023	Approve with conditions	16/01/2024
ii) P23/03163/F Raising of the roof line to facilitate the erection of a first floor rear extension to form additional living accommodation. 8 Rathbone Close Coalpit Heath Bristol South Gloucestershire BS36 2TN	Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council OBJECTS to this application on the grounds that raising the roofline will result in an extension that is not subservient to the original dwelling and that will be overbearing in terms of both the original dwelling and the street scene. It therefore conflicts with Policies Sites and Places Plan policy PSP 38.	12/11/2023	Refusal	20/01/2024
iii) P23/03026/RVC Variation of condition 3 (approved plans) attached to planning permission P20/14987/F - Conversion and refurbishment of 4no. buildings to form 7no. dwellings with landscaping and associated works. Change of use of surrounding land (sui generis) to agricultural use, as defined in the Town and Coun... Box Hedge Farm Boxhedge Farm Lane Coalpit Heath Bristol South Gloucestershire BS36 2UW	Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council has NO OBJECTION. (Delegated)	01/11/2023	Approve with conditions	01/02/2024
iv) P23/03495/TRE Works to 2no. Oak to install root barrier covered by TPO 311 dated 12/09/1979. Heath Farm Ram Hill Coalpit Heath South Gloucestershire BS36 2TX	Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council has NO OBJECTION. (Delegated)	20/12/2023	Approve with conditions	06/02/2024
v) P23/02674/HH Erection of single storey rear extension to provide additional living accommodation. Erection of detached garage. Ridge Barn Westerleigh Road Coalpit Heath Bristol South Gloucestershire BS36 2UP	Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council has NO OBJECTION to the application. However, it asks that the planning officer checks that the overall increase in volume of the building is acceptable and that sufficient private amenity space will be left.	22/09/2023	Approve with conditions	07/02/2024

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Appendix 2 – January 2024 payments list

Date	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
02/01/2024	Microsoft licence agreeme	Absolutely PC (GoCardles	36.74	7.35	44.09
02/01/2024	Annual subscription	SLCC	188.00		188.00
02/01/2024	Monthly Expenses	SWSimmons	61.30		61.30
02/01/2024	Monthly Expenses	R Davis Deputy Clerk	68.01		68.01
02/01/2024	Storage unit rental fee	PE King (Bristol) Ltd	73.33	14.67	88.00
02/01/2024	PWLB loan repayment	PWLB lending facility	974.37		974.37
02/01/2024	Grant	Henfield Hall Managemer	500.00		500.00
03/01/2024	Youth provision via FC PC	Frampton Cotterell Parisl	1,137.50		1,137.50
03/01/2024	Warm Welcome payment	Westerleigh Neighbourhc	150.00		150.00
04/01/2024	Grass cutting	CPS Grounds Ltd	830.92	166.19	997.11
08/01/2024	Room hire	Westerleigh Village Hall	20.00		20.00
08/01/2024	Room hire	Manor Hall	38.00		38.00
10/01/2024	Loo hire	Andyloos	159.60	31.92	191.52
16/01/2024	Annual subscription	Starboard Systems (SCR	419.87	83.97	503.84
16/01/2024	Annual subscription	CPRE	60.00		60.00
16/01/2024	Repairs to fabric of buildin	Manor Hall	2,296.00		2,296.00
16/01/2024	50% upfront payment	IVEL AQUATICS LTD	26,598.45	5,319.69	31,918.14
16/01/2024	Repairs to fabric of buildin	Manor Hall	2,494.00		2,494.00
17/01/2024	Aerator at Bitterwell Lake	EON	0.20	0.01	0.21
17/01/2024	Bank charges	Unity Trust Bank	28.00		28.00
21/01/2024	Council mobile phone	H3G (Three)	2.50	0.50	3.00
25/01/2024	Monthly Pension payment	Avon Pension Fund	339.89		339.89
25/01/2024	Salary				
25/01/2024	Salary				
25/01/2024	PAYE	HMRC	449.09		449.09
29/01/2024	Tree work at WPF	Woodstock Tree Services	450.00	90.00	540.00
30/01/2024	Monthly Expenses	SWSimmons	61.30		61.30
30/01/2024	Pest control services	Venables Pest Control	300.00		300.00
31/01/2024	Microsoft licence agreeme	Absolutely PC (GoCardles	36.74	7.35	44.09
31/01/2024	Bank charges	Natwest	5.95		5.95

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**Appendix 3 - Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council – Local Plan Consultation
Response (approved 12th February 2024)**

2. Council priorities and local plan objectives

Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council is broadly supportive of the Local Plan priorities and objectives.

Objective 3

This parish council is pleased to see the climate and nature emergencies identified as a priority. Delivering nature recovery and re-establishing functioning ecosystems is an essential part of mitigating and adapting to climate change.

We fully support the following recommendations made by Frampton Cotterell Nature Group:

- Objective 3d should require a 20% Biodiversity Net Gain for all new developments, rather than the minimum 10%. Robust monitoring will be key to actual delivery, as well as adequate enforcement to protect natural habitats and ensure regulations are adhered to.
- The plan should include more detail about how nature recovery and public access to nature will be delivered.
- To support the nature recovery ambitions in the West of England Joint Green Infrastructure Strategy the plan should include specific and measurable targets and ambitions.
- To support 30x30 – the government commitment to protect and manage 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 - the plan should seek to dramatically increase the amount of land which is protected and managed for nature.

Objective 6 - Deliverability and viability

This objective is of critical importance in deciding the location, nature and scale of development. This parish council is strongly supportive of the view that

- Development should be directed to those locations well-served or capable of being well-served by existing utilities and infrastructure and
- Delivery of new development is supported by the timely provision of all necessary infrastructure

We have applied these sub objectives carefully in its assessment of the development sites in this parish put forward in the emerging strategy.

We support the inclusion of sub objective 6f Infrastructure for alternative-fuel vehicles should be available in new developments.

3a Planning for economy and jobs

No comments.

3b Planning for economy and jobs

No comments.

3c Planning for economy and jobs

Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish includes within its boundaries important employment areas servicing Yate – Westerleigh Business Park, Badminton Road Trading Estate, South Gloucestershire Council Offices and part of the Stover Road and North Road Industrial. We agree that these should continue to be safeguarded for employment.

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We have concerns over the potential impact of the green belt site BV13 on the existing abbatoir facility. This is a major employer in the local area and any move to bring homes or other uses into this area that would rely on the abbatoir closing/relocating would impact local jobs.

4. Planning for town centres

Do you have any comments on our proposed updates to the primary shopping area and wider town centre boundaries?

Residents of Coalpit Heath, Westerleigh and hamlets in the parish rely strongly on services provided in Yate. We therefore support the proposed expansion of the town centre and primary shopping area boundaries here.

5a, 5b Planning for infrastructure

This parish council welcomes the stronger focus on infrastructure requirements and early provision as part of new development.

However, the consultation document states that the new strategy for jobs and homes will minimise infrastructure requirements by locating new development where there may be some existing capacity in infrastructure networks. Avoiding big ticket items is part of that strategy. In this parish this means there will be no M4 junction 18a nor a Westerleigh bypass, which were a key part of the initial transport strategy for the Land North of Lyde Green BV13/15 call for sites submission. We contend that there is not 'existing capacity' in the road network to serve the Land North of Lyde Green BV13 site put forward as part of the preferred strategy in this parish. See response to section 7- Towards a preferred strategy.

6a. Urban areas and market towns

No comments.

7. Towards a preferred strategy

Do you have any comments on our emerging preferred strategy?

Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council is broadly supportive of the emerging preferred strategy. However, it strongly objects to the inclusion of site BV13 Land North of Lyde Green for the reasons set out below.

Green Belt

This parish council has made clear its opposition to development in the Green Belt at every stage of the Local Plan consultation process. The preferred emerging strategy is based upon extending urban fringe development into highly sensitive Green Belt. The plan to breach both the M4 south of the hamlet of Henfield and the A4174 at its eastern fringe, will effectively result in the encroachment of greater Bristol towards Yate and Pucklechurch.

For this parish council the most concerning aspect of the preferred strategy is the removal of land from the Green Belt at the site referred to as Land North of Lyde Green (south of Henfield) BV13, allowing development north of the M4 motorway. The M4 has long formed a strong boundary between the countryside and the Bristol urban area. We contend that the breaching of that boundary significantly weakens the Green Belt and fundamentally undermines its purposes as set out in the NPPF. Furthermore, we note and echo the concerns raised by Pucklechurch Parish Council, that the removal of sites on the eastern fringe and a breaching of the consistent boundary formed by the A4174 and Dramway track, will similarly undermine Green Belt purposes.

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The WECA Green Belt Analysis, part of the plan evidence base, identifies the parcel of Green Belt (P30) that makes up Land North of Lyde Green BV13, as making a significant contribution to four of the five purposes of the Green Belt. The assessment notes the potential harm to Green Belt purposes from release of land in this area i.e.: preventing sprawl of the Bristol urban area (Purpose 1), preventing coalescence of towns (Purpose 2) and preventing encroachment on the countryside. Most significantly it notes that any expansion beyond the M4 boundary feature will diminish the function of the Green Belt in providing separation between towns – Yate and Bristol.

If the Green Belt status of land north of the M4 is removed, this parish council is deeply concerned that a dangerous precedent for future development of the Green Belt will be set. The swathe of Green Belt north of the M4 will be left extremely vulnerable to future developments expanding into it, absorbing hamlets and villages between Bristol and Yate such as Henfield, Kendleshire, Coalpit Heath and Nibley. For example, additional land adjacent to BV13 (BV15) and a further site alongside it at Meadow Lodge Farm FC1, are already included in the consultation document under Lens 2 – Urban Edge. As Pucklechurch Parish Council has noted, that part of the Green Belt beyond the A4174 and Dramway track will be left similarly vulnerable. The two breaches taken together will have a compounding negative impact on Green Belt purposes, and will leave this whole section of Green Belt vulnerable to future expansion.

Incursion into the Green Belt will also negatively impact the climate change and ecological objectives of the future Local Plan. We echo the concerns raised by Pucklechurch Parish Council that much of the Green Belt around the east fringe is undisturbed and undeveloped and has a vital role in addressing climate change by providing critical carbon storage, helping to alleviate urban heat island effects and is able to adsorb heavy rain and mitigate against flood risk (NPPF 124b). There is no evidence this has been considered.

We also echo Pucklechurch Parish Council's point that the CPRE's State of the Green Belt 2023 report clearly identifies the very important part the Green Belt plays in the mental, social and physical wellbeing of our populations. It should be noted that the benefits of Green Belt in South Gloucestershire are not only essential to local residents. With a lack of Green Belt in Bristol (600ha) and being so easily accessible, South Gloucestershire's 23,040ha of Green Belt plays a vital role in the wellbeing of Bristol residents. Again, there is no evidence this has been considered.

This parish council recognises that whilst Green Belt land may not be necessarily of high ecological value, the loss of any greenfield site to development represents the loss of a potential return to natural processes. The loss of Green Belt land will reduce the overall area of semi-natural land in South Gloucestershire which is currently protected. Please note our comments under section 14 on the Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors. I.e. as the site Land North of Lyde Green BV13 falls within one of these corridors, development here must be subject to conditions which ensure considerable gains for biodiversity, connectivity and public access to nature.

We recognise the council's commitment to a Stage 2 Green Belt analysis in the next steps for this process; however the Stage 1 analysis already states site BV13 being of high value in the Green Belt so we question what more can be said to overcome this status and justify its removal?

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Roads and other infrastructure

South Gloucestershire Council knows that future development “will put further pressure on existing infrastructure, much of which is at or nearing capacity”. It has also acknowledged that “additional demand will need infrastructure improvements or additional provision and new investment if existing and new neighbourhoods are to be sustainable” (2023 Monitoring Report p12). The Land North of Lyde Green site BV13 cannot be served by existing infrastructure, but there is limited detail of the infrastructure that will be provided as part of the development, summed up as a ‘primary school, local centre, park & ride’ on the interactive map.

South Gloucestershire already experiences severe traffic congestion at peak times which adversely affects bus journey times and reliability. The Clean Air strategy shows traffic has increased by 30% (compared to the national average of 21%) since 1991. 87% households have access to a car (national average 73%) with considerably higher than national average numbers having 2 or more cars (42% compared to 29%). The census 2021 has confirmed, residents predominately commute by car.

The Land North of Lyde Green site BV13 does not currently have the necessary highways, public transport solutions and active travel connections or facilities to support such a large community. The transport plan included within the original call for sites proposal for the site is predicated upon the building of a new M4 junction 18a and a Westerleigh bypass. Neither of these major infrastructure investment projects are going ahead and no alternative transport plan has been developed. The development will therefore inevitably impact the B4465 Westerleigh Road and add to congestion around Westerleigh village, Henfield and Coalpit Heath areas to Yate, the M5, and M4. The closure of the A432 overbridge has demonstrated the potential impacts of large increases in traffic along local routes – Henfield Road, Ram Hill, Westerleigh Road and through Westerleigh village to Yate. Existing local roads are narrow and many are prone to flooding e.g. Westerleigh Road by the crematorium and Henfield Road.

Currently only two roads connect BV13 with Lyde Green to the south of the M4, where existing facilities are located. It is unclear how the new community will connect with Lyde Green and access services and employment there. We are concerned, certainly during the build timeframe and prior to all on site services being supplied by the developer, that it will be existing rural roads and villages that will take the pressure from this site.

Further congestion will impact access to motorway links and the north east Bristol fringe and could in fact deter the business opportunities the plan envisages. There is also a risk that further congestion will compromise the ability to retain existing companies in the area that rely on deliveries and logistics.

Community and site issues

BV13 should correctly be called ‘Land North of Lyde Green and South of Henfield’ as it will have a major impact (visual amenity, access to the countryside, social impacts, traffic) on this hamlet immediately to the north, which has traditionally been separated from urban sprawl by the M4.

To provide affordable and starter homes for the communities of Henfield and Coalpit Heath BV13 is likely to be too disconnected from those communities. There may be better sites to provide for the future housing needs of the existing local community. This parish council is not in a position to name specific alternative sites without further public consultation taking place, but there are sites within/ close to the parish which it considers could be put forward as alternatives.

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Finally, there are a number of serious constraints that affect this site as set out on the interactive map summary, some of which will negatively impact the quality of life of future residents:

- Flood risk zones 2 and 3 in the south west corner of the site and the site is known to be at risk of groundwater flooding
- The site contains areas known to be at risk from contamination. Health and Safety Executive Zones, associated with the Oil Storage facility and associated pipelines located to the south east of the site and gas pipelines running north to south.
- Close proximity to the M4 motorway resulting in noise and air quality issues for future residents and employees.

Mitigating measures for BV13

Should South Gloucestershire Council adopt this preferred strategy it must ensure that amending the Green Belt does not weaken the remaining Green Belt. There must be a particular focus on protecting those sites identified under Lens 2 – Urban Edge, that are immediately adjacent to Land North of Lyde Green BV13, as they are extremely vulnerable to developer-led expansion – see comment below. This protection must extend to the swathe of Green Belt land north of the M4 and beyond the boundary of the A4174, as the release of some land here will have set a precedent for the expansion of future developments.

If BV13 goes ahead, then in order to protect the land north of Westerleigh Road, prevent development incursion within BV13 towards Henfield, prevent overdevelopment of BV13 and alleviate traffic impact on surrounding roads, the parish council would specifically request:

1. References in the Emerging Strategy to the site's capacity for 1200 additional homes beyond the plan period are removed and text is added to provide reassurance that the proposed 800 homes within the plan period are sufficient for provision of local amenities and the primary school.
2. A village centre for BV13 must be provided at an early stage in the planning and build process – with health and education. It is not acceptable to loosely put forward 2000 houses to include schools, health etc over a 30 year period and the services to arrive during a subsequent second Local Plan phase. The 730-800 houses in the first Local Plan phase (2025 -2040) will be completely unsustainable if reliant upon existing local infrastructure in terms of education and health.
3. Housing density must be reduced to sensible levels once land has been removed from the site for sport and employment. Maximum height levels for proposed housing should be set in order to limit impact on the wider area – remaining Green Belt and the hamlet of Henfield immediately to the north.
4. Recognising the Green Belt value of the BV13 site and the impact its removal will have on the surrounding countryside we propose a safeguarding measure for the additional Green Belt land surrounding the BV13 site whereas a condition is made whereby the developer purchases additional land (for instance, that put forward in Lens 2 (L2-BV15) and potentially further land along the M4 corridor) for the creation of a protected green Common. We envisage this being offered to the Parish Council to look after on behalf of the community, potentially being improved upon via S106 funding. It would provide covenanted green space for recreation and nature and permanently act as a green barrier to assist in preventing the encroachment of Bristol towards Yate.

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5. The abattoir must remain in its current position and be safeguarded from development. The site is a major employer.
6. The existing road network would provide a poor fit with the level of additional traffic this site would bring – both during the construction period and once it is complete. We propose that a dual carriageway extension is provided from the Dragonfly roundabout across the M4 and directly into the site, straight into the centre of the development. Westerleigh Road could then be allowed to join onto this trunk road. This would send the bulk of traffic via the A4174 and reduce dependence on Westerleigh Road/Henfield Road as well as the adjoining hamlets and villages. It could also allow for connection by services such as Metrobus into the new development.

Furthermore, in agreement with neighbouring parish councils (e.g. Iron Acton Parish Council) and the Frampton Cotterell Nature Group, we strongly urge South Gloucestershire Council to extend the Green Belt elsewhere to compensate and ensure that there is no net loss of Green Belt land. We are reassured however, that the preferred strategy largely avoids development in the parts of the Frome Valley Green Belt closest to the villages of Coalpit Heath and Westerleigh and the hamlets in the north of the parish at Mays Hill and Nibley.

Specific comments on the other development site in this parish are below.

Site code: FC1

Address: Land off Park Lane (capacity 90 homes)

90 homes at Land of Park Lane, adjacent to the existing Blackberry Park development, can be viewed as proportionate growth for existing local facilities. This site is not in the Green Belt so its development does not undermine and diminish the purposes of the Frome Valley Green Belt.

8. Strategy Lens: No Green Belt Loss

This parish council recognises that focusing development around north Yate, Chipping Sodbury and rural villages to the north of the parish, will lead to increased car-based commuter travel across the Green Belt to access employment in Bristol. This would particularly impact the A432, Westerleigh village and the Westerleigh Road. Increased car-based commuting would have a major impact on quality of life in the villages and hamlets of the parish and is not supported. Concerns about the loss of highly sensitive Green Belt locations are set out in the response to section 7 – Towards a preferred strategy.

9. Strategy Lens: Urban Edge

This parish council notes that this strategy would see further encroachment onto Green Belt land north of the M4 than proposed in the preferred strategy, further diminishing the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. This lens therefore compounds the severe concerns already raised in section 7 and would be a worse option for future development in the parish than the emerging preferred strategy and is not supported.

Although this strategy lens has been discounted as a whole, the inclusion of Green Belt sites within the consultation document is very concerning. Their inclusion puts the Green Belt at risk of developer-led expansion of the smaller Green Belt sites included within the preferred strategy. We expect intense lobbying from developers for inclusion of such sites within the final version of the plan and this pressure must be fiercely resisted.

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This parish council has set out its opposition to the inclusion of BV13 Land North of Lyde Green within the Local Plan because it puts the whole of the Green Belt north of the M4 at risk. This argument equally applies the Green Belt sites east of A4174.

This parish council therefore resists in the strongest terms any development of sites included in this strategy lens that are adjacent to Land North of Lyde Green BV13, whether or not development of the primary site goes ahead. See also comments in section 7 – Towards a preferred strategy. These sites are:

L2 – FC1 Meadow Lodge Farm, The Hollows, Coalpit Heath (capacity 366 homes)

L2 – BV15 Land North of Lyde Green. This is site BV13 extended north of Westerleigh Road to accommodate a further 200 homes. (Capacity 1000 homes)

10. Strategy Lens: Transport Corridors and Hubs

This lens groups larger scale developments around villages in the Winterbourne area, including Coalpit Heath, around Yate and Charfield and along the A38 corridor from Almondsbury to Thornbury.

This strategy would see the most development in the parish and, due to the proposed locations and scale, would as a whole represent the worst option for future development in the parish. (Total approx 2309 homes in the parish). It would not include development of the Green Belt immediately north of the M4 Land North of Lyde Green BV13, nor development at Land off Park Lane FC1.

A432 Corridor, Yate and Chipping Sodbury

This parish council broadly endorses the arguments made in the consultation document against substantial growth along the A432 Corridor, Yate and Chipping Sodbury. In particular it endorses the challenge identified at point 6c.19 and argues strongly that this makes larger growth at Coalpit Heath unsuitable - 'The delivery of homes along the transport corridor would still need to be proportionate to the relative access to services and facilities and therefore larger growth at Coalpit Heath may not be suitable. The larger growth would not deliver a substantial level of new facilities, and this would build in a need to travel or overwhelm local services and facilities at Coalpit Heath.'

In addition to the challenges set out in the consultation document this parish council argues that the proposed development sites surrounding Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath are key sites for local biodiversity and public access to nature. The development proposed by this lens would further add to the pollution of the River Frome and would be a disaster for biodiversity and public access to nature in this area.

We object strongly to development of the following sites adjacent to Coalpit Heath in this parish for the reasons outlined above:

- Two sites east of Roundways L3 – FC1, L3 – FC3 (total capacity 1600 homes)

This is Green Belt land. Development here would fundamentally change the character of the village of Coalpit Heath and have major impacts in terms of visual amenity, access to the countryside, social impacts and traffic.

We also object strongly to development at most of these sites to the north and east of this parish:

- Land North side of Badminton Road L3-FC13 (capacity 109 homes)
- Land at Beech Hill Farm Westerleigh Rd L3-FC11 (capacity 150 homes)
- Land east and west of Westerleigh Rd L3-FC4 (capacity 32000m2 employment)

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These sites are all on Green Belt land. Development at most of these sites would fundamentally change the character of the hamlets of Mays Hill and Nibley and have major impacts in terms of visual amenity, access to the countryside, social impacts and traffic.

11. Planning for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

This parish council applauds the commitment to meet the accommodation needs of gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople communities.

The new plan aims to meet the requirements of national planning policy and 'begin to respond to the concerns, including those highlighted in recent planning appeal decisions. In doing so it anticipated that the council will be better placed to resist proposals for development in inappropriate locations' (7.10 – 7.11). This is a particular concern in Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish, given recent approvals for sites in the Green Belt.

However, there is no indication of where new sites might be located across the county. Equally, although it is envisaged there will be intensification on existing authorised sites, again there is no indication or details of which sites are to undergo intensification. The identification of specific sites must be an absolute priority for the new Local Plan, otherwise the Green Belt that is left (once proposed development sites are removed), will continue to be highly vulnerable to proposals for this type of development.

Para 7.42 in the consultation document proposes to remove Green Belt sites from the Green Belt because of the restriction on personal use and time limit conditions. If this proposal is actioned whilst a shortage of sites continues to exist, how will the practice of buying up/ acquiring private land in the Green Belt for development of unplanned sites be prevented?

12. Planning for Renewable Energy

The Parish Council encourages renewable energy initiatives at a small scale on existing housing and buildings and would look to see incentives for installation across the county.

As a parish we have already seen a number of large-scale solar farms in and around our boundary. Due to the nature of the county there are large swathes of green space notionally suitable for solar farms, together with farmers looking to diversify.

It is very hard, as a parish council, to oppose such an initiative when it presents at a planning stage – especially when, in planning terms, they are classed as temporary facilities – during a time when South Gloucestershire is reacting to a climate crisis.

However, we as a parish council are concerned with the density of farms, the loss of amenity space locally to them, the impact on the aesthetic across the countryside and the proximity to local hamlets and villages. We would like to see rules placed restricting them at a high level, allowing planning applications to come forward with more suitable locations, either:-

- the number of solar farms in a given geographic area
- or the minimum distance of a solar farm to a village/hamlet

We are encouraged by the WECA talk of exploring sustainable energy research using redundant coal mines and would be interested in Local Plan acknowledgement of this – together with consideration of the above ground facilities required and their suitability in residential or green areas.

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13. Minerals

No comments.

14a., 14b, 14c Strategic GI Corridors, Strategic Viewpoints & Visually Important Hillside

This parish council welcomes the safeguarding of Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors. However, the consultation document states that the network does not stop, nor protect, all land within it from development. It goes on to state that development within it will be 'managed by policies and plans for enhancing the corridors and assets within them'. This is a critical point for corridor D Wickwar – Westerleigh – Bitton (Westerleigh Vale / Oldland Ridge/ East Fringe, which includes within it the proposed North of Lyde Green site BV13. In common with the Frampton Cotterell Nature Group we argue that development within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network should be limited and must be subject to conditions which ensure considerable gains for biodiversity, connectivity and public access to nature. Furthermore, the SGIN corridors should be altered to ensure easy public access to the areas prioritised for biodiversity investment.

We are particularly concerned that the Land North of Lyde Green site BV13 will lose its current protection as designated Green Belt land. The consultation document provides minimal detail about how this site will be managed to enhance the corridor. This question must be addressed in order to protect the integrity and function of this corridor. As has already been stated, the surrounding Green Belt left in this corridor must also receive enhanced protection as a priority, as it will inevitably become vulnerable to planned/ speculative development once the M4 boundary has been breached. We have already raised suggestions in our response to question 7 (the preferred strategy) as to how we think greater protections could be given should the plan go ahead with the removal of sites such as BV13 from the green belt.

Now that the open areas to the north of Frampton Cotterell and east of Coalpit Heath have been identified as not favourable for development, we agree with the Frampton Cotterell Nature Group, that they should be included in the network. These are significant areas for biodiversity, connectivity and public access to nature. We are particularly concerned that the area surrounding Frampton End Farm has not been included in the SGIN.

15. Do you have any comments on the proposed range of new Local Plan Policies?

No comments on policies, except those below.

29. Stewardship arrangements

This parish council strongly supports the inclusion of parish councils amongst the bodies that should be considered for management of shared and public space on new development sites, with appropriate funding.

Other

In support of Frampton Cotterell Nature Group, we would like to see a Nature Recovery policy which includes:

- 20% Biodiversity Net Gain for all new developments.
- Specific and measurable targets and commitments.
- A rewilding policy which proactively supports the reintroduction of lost species.
- Plans to maximise public engagement with citizen science to ensure that planning is based on up to date and accurate ecological data.
- The identification of specific sites and areas for nature recovery. - Plans to improve public access to nature.