

English Bicknor Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd February 2026 at English Bicknor Village Hall.

Those present were as follows:

Cllr Kevin Braithwaite.

Cllr Mrs Pat Drinkall.

Cllr Peter Warden.

Cllr David Gunter.

Cllr Mrs Avril Bowen.

Cllr Harry Cole.

Clerk Jonathan Martin.

Visiting District Councillor Tim Gwilliam.

01. Apologies and welcome.

Member of the Public: Mrs Sue Yemm joined the meeting as an observer with a declared interest in joining the Parish Council as a sitting Councillor.

Apologies were received from County Cllr Piers Camp after the meeting; his absence was due to a medical matter.

02. Forum.

Cllr Gwilliam, as a member of the District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an employee of Gloucestershire Rural Housing Provider, raised the upcoming housing survey by the FODDC. Subsequently it has been noted that a revised local plan was approved consultation at Full Council on 22nd January 2026. The consultation period ran from 4th Feb 2026 to 18th March 2026. Notes are added as an addendum at the end of these minutes relating to the Local Plan Approach for the Village of English Bicknor and other small settlements.

Cllr Gunter asked how this would be affected by the planned abolition of the District Council. It was believed that the survey would be completed before this. A preliminary concern likely to be identified by the survey would be a lack of local infrastructure to support a substantial increase in population. The Cllr Mrs Drinkall then asked whether this would incur any costs to the Parish Council, and was assured that it would not.

03. The reading and confirmation of the minutes of the previous bi-monthly Meeting.

Proposed. Cllr Peter Warden.

Seconded. Cllr David Gunter.

Resolved.

The Minutes were signed.

04. Matters arising from the minutes of the last bi-monthly Meeting.

951.3 Community Speed Watch Camera.

The Chair asked if the VAS, located on Bicknor Street should be turned around to face the other way. The advantage of this is that data could be gained from the other side of the road. There was general agreement that this should be done when possible.

Regarding the Hillersland Camera, it was reported missing over the previous month, and the Clerk and the Chair reported it to the police. It was later discovered that the sign had been accidentally taken by the County Council. A new sign had been installed as part of this mistake. Mr Stuart Bullen reported that the County Council has possession of the Parish Council's camera and will work to return it.

However, this return of Parish Council property has not yet happened.

This delay was regarded as being unacceptable. Councillors commissioned the chair and the clerk to continue to chase up the return of the sign. This may involve the inclusion of the County Councillor, Piers Camp, to assist in this return. If the camera remains lost, the County Council would be liable for the resulting financial loss.

84.5 Red House Lane.

The Clerk reported correspondence with Gloucestershire Highways regarding the request to add signs warning drivers of the road's unsuitability for cars due to the buildup of mud. There were no plans from Highways to install these.

An alternative may be for the Parish Council to purchase and install its own signs and receive permission retroactively. However, the landowners could be approached to install signs without needing local authority permission.

The Clerk will investigate the options for custom signs and report back. This sign would have to be distinct from the mass-produced public signs. The sign's text would need to read something along the lines of 'you will get stuck.' The sign could also be concurrent with European sign norms.

The Chair stated that he would approach the company that made the sign for Symonds Yat foot bridge for a quote.

219.2 Pavement Weed Spraying.

The Clerk reiterated previous requests to the highways to have the weeds scraped, and if so, what is the schedule and location for this? Cllr Gunter suggested that he had equipment that may be lent to facilitate this. Ideally this should be done before the various events set for the spring and summer.

The Chair suggested that if Highways renege on this, then the Parish Council should consider hiring contractors to do this.

330. Potholes.

Eastbach Road. Cllr Gunter suggested that this road be another location for a warning sign about its treacherous condition.

At both north and south ends of English Bicknor village, the red tarmac areas have been degraded to a point where the road is becoming unsafe.

Since the last meeting, Gloucestershire Highways has at least circled damaged areas of the road in white paint. A number of repairs seem to be of a poor standard and re-repair required in some areas which was noted as being a waste of budget.

383. Water Leak. Hillersland/Symonds Yat Rock Road.

The precise location of the water leak is between Reddinhorn Cottage and Rosebay Willow Cottage.

As the water runs across the street, it is a matter for Gloucestershire Highways and can therefore be filed on the FixMyStreet website.

387. Regarding the safety cones and drop off areas at the School.

The Chair reported that he had attended The Road Safety Liaison Group (RSG) meeting which is the entity that provided the budget for this initiative. This group is aware of the all matters relating to this and that they are active in helping the school with the success of this safety project.

397. Footpaths in the Parish.

None.

415. Wildlife and pest matters.

Cllr Mrs Drinkall questioned who the 'Forestry Keeper' was in the text of the previous minutes. A more accurate term would be 'Ranger.'

417. A. Re: Lucy Court power pole overgrowth.

Cllr Gunter reported that the clearing was done, and that the local family said that they were very thankful for his efforts.

This item will be regarded as resolved.

15.1 Re: Derelict Lorry trailer near Stowfield Road.

Updates on the situation were given. The FODDC planning officer was said to be engaging with the landowner, and it had been agreed by the owner to remove the waste and the vehicle from the site.

The landowner would be thanked by the Parish Council for this. The clerk would pursue this.

There remain potential criminal issues regarding the alleged fly-tipping, and the Clerk will continue to report on this matter.

05. Report of the County Councillor.

n/a

06. Report of the District Councillor.

District Councillor Gwilliam reported that there was a series of upcoming local consultations about the modified local plan. The Clerk would forward these dates and locations to the Parish Council.

The District Council's budget is set to be finalised in April.

07. Planning.

- **7.1 P1518/25/FUL Sunrise, Hillersland Lane, Shortstanding, Coleford. Demolition of carport and erection of single garage.**

The application overlaps with the jurisdictions of English Bicknor Parish Council and West Dean Parish Council.

West Dean Parish Council has already committed to this and has no objections; however, they had requested an archaeological report from the site.

English Bicknor Parish reviewed the application and has no comment to make.

- **7.2 P1548/25/FUL Bungalow At Sterts Farm, Ross Road, Shortstanding, Coleford. Removal of condition 03 (occupation) of P1257/09/FUL to allow for occupation of dwelling without agricultural tie.**

The application overlaps with the jurisdictions of English Bicknor Parish Council and West Dean Parish Council.

The bungalow had previously been tied to agricultural work. This classification may now be out of date.

Cllr Gunter requested that the vote be recorded. Two Cllrs supported the application. Four Cllrs had no comment.

A majority vote for no comment was made regarding the application.

English Bicknor Parish reviewed the application and has no comment to make.

08. Financial Report and accounts for Payment.

Jonathan Martin – clerk's wages - £334.94

Total: £334.94

Recognise £10.77 received as Wayleave payment from the National Grid.

The report was given, with the Parish Council's finances been in a good condition for the final quarter of the year.

Proposed: Cllr Mrs Pat Drinkall.

Seconded: Cllr Peter Warden.

Resolved.

10. Highway Matters.

It was report by Cllr Cole that the condition of Folly Lane is now silted in multiple locations and has poor drainage. There are two specific points along the road that are particularly bad. To be raised under FixMyStreet.

It was also confirmed from recent inspections that the Symonds Yat sign was still in good order. This would be reported to the local Forestry England office.

The Clerk handed out the recent formal notices and attached maps of local road closures around Symonds Yat. These closures were set for April 21st.

11. Ash Dieback in the Parish.

Nothing further. Multiple trees with reach of the highways have signs of the disease. Forestry and Highways have informed the Parish Council that this matter is under review as part of their normal operations.

12. Footpaths in the Parish.

The Clerk had previously handed out the road closure information.

13. Wildlife and Pest Matters.

Cllr Gunter reported on a meeting with the National Farming Union, emphasising the poor clean up of dead animals. The cause of this was bureaucratic in nature.

14. Correspondence received since the last meeting.

The Clerk reported that the precept forms for the next financial year had been submitted without incident.

Regarding the planning for the upcoming annual meetings, Deputy Chair Cllr Drinkall stated that she could not make the proposed date of May 11th. To support Cllr Drinkall's role in the event, it was agreed that the date should be changed to the following week, on May 18th. The Clerk would see to this and report back.

15. Any other matters affecting the Parish Council.

Cllr Gunter proposed that English Bicknor Parish should combine its efforts with West Dean, Goodrich, Welsh Bicknor and Lydbrook Parish Councils to share the burden of speed signs and pictorial warning signs. Ideally a single meeting could be arranged to accommodate this. The Clerk would begin to undertake this by reaching out to the neighbouring councils on this matter.

Cllr Drinkall requested that an application for litter picking at Chapel Hill to Stertf Farm be made. The Clerk would undertake this.

Mrs Susan Yem was asked if she would formally apply for the position of Parish Councillor and she agreed that after much deliberation she would put herself forward.

It was agreed unanimously by Councillors that the Casual Vacancy for the role of Parish Councillor would be assigned to Mrs Susan Yemm, who was warmly welcomed, and that this co-option would take place at the next meeting.

16. Date of the next meeting.

The next Meeting is set for 30th March 2026.

End 9:12

Addendum: Local Plan 2025-2045 extract for the Parish of English Bicknor

<https://fdean-consult.objective.co.uk/kpse/>

Document text relating to English Bicknor:

English Bicknor is in a location where development could be prominent and harmful to the exceptional natural landscape. New development must complement the high quality of the built environment and the Conservation Area. The land around the church and the burial ground are prominent and visually important open areas in the village and the monument itself and its setting must be protected. The Important Open Areas to the south (in the newer part of the village) should be protected from incremental change including the enclosure of open areas (an Article 4 Direction applies). The settlement will therefore see only small scale change during the plan period within a closely defined settlement boundary.

Document text relating to Small Settlements:

7.36 Within the District there are very many settlements ranging in size from a handful of properties to towns with over 10 000. Those villages and towns listed above with defined boundaries are the locations to which most types of additional development will be expected to gravitate generally in accord with their size and the availability of facilities which exist or can be made available. The great majority of identifiable settlements are however small, often undefined and rural in nature.

7.37 Settlements in the FoDD without defined boundaries vary from small nucleated centres to widely dispersed areas on common land or on part of the forest fringes. In general the LP seeks to conserve these as part of the fabric of the area and will support only a limited amount of change. This may include appropriate conversion of buildings and can in well justified cases include new affordable housing in small groups. It will not usually include new dwellings unrelated to agriculture or not otherwise justified. The locations of the smaller settlements are often less sustainable with little or no access to public transport, and a need for travel from them to access even basic services. In addition the variety of settlements tend to appear as part of the rural landscape and should remain so.

7.38 Some development, notably that for agriculture requires a rural location as may various associated rural businesses. In addition many tourism and recreational activities are likely to seek rural locations. Tourist accommodation does not always need to and should where possible be accessible using a variety of transport options. Small villages not individually listed above (i.e. without defined boundaries) may exceptionally be suitable locations for small groups of affordable housing and may see some very limited change beyond that. Overall however the LP will need to guide change to the most sustainable locations which are the defined centres and it is in compliance with national policies in doing so.

