



Aldworth Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Tuesday 6th May 2025, 7.30pm at Aldworth Village Hall

Minute ref: 001/060525/APCM

Members Present: Cllr. Kate Walters, Cllr. Ilona Herbent, Cllr. Bill Bennetts, Cllr. Graham Rutter & Cllr. Coyle (WBC)

Members Absent: None

Officers Present: Mrs Faye Bates (Clerk & RFO)

MOP In Attendance: 1

Meeting Start Time: 19.30pm

	Action
Cllr. Walters welcomed all to the meeting and quorum was achieved.	
Elect the Chairman of Aldworth Parish Council for 2025/2026: Cllr. Walters was proposed by Cllr. Bennetts as Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr. Herbent. Cllr. Walters signed the declaration of office.	
Elect the Vice Chairman of Aldworth Parish Council for 2025/2026: Cllr. Herbent was proposed by Cllr Bennetts as Vice Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr. Walters. Cllr. Herbent signed the declaration of office.	
10 Minute Open session: One member of public present, would like to speak regarding the parking issue at Westridge Green. This was approved by Cllr. Walters.	
Declaration of Interests: None. Apologies: None Minutes: The minutes of the March meeting were agreed. Clerk to pass printed copy to Cllr. Walters for signing.	
Chairman's Annual report: Firstly I would like to thank all the members of the council for their hard work and time with a special thank you to Faye. You were appointed as Parish Clerk and RFO just over a year ago, it has been a steep learning curve in which you have worked really hard for us running everything very smoothly. Thank you also to Laura Coyle for being very proactive and positive in supporting the council. Bill joined us in September and has been a huge asset to our team. Importantly we have one more vacancy which we are very keen to fill. The vacancy has been advertised on the village notice board, the leaflet, community WhatsApp groups and in the village hall. Hopefully we fill the role soon enabling us to have a full team. Keys points of note from the past year are as follows: A new community notice board due to be erected very soon by the village hall. Bill and Kate did councillor training in January. Recent Tree Survey on Parsonage Green and Shoulder of Mutton. Highlight being the community Litter pick followed by bacon rolls in April. This was very well attended by many parishioners who enjoyed the social gathering too. Ongoing: Community speedwatch monitoring and new ramp/access path to the village hall.	
Councillor Coyle Annual Report:	
Local News Members Bids: Each year ward members can bid for match funding for a project or projects in their ward. This year I was successful in obtaining funding for new play equipment for Streatley. The previous year I obtained funding for new play equipment in Ashampstead, as well as a bike repair station in Upper Basildon. I would love this coming year to assist with a project in Aldworth. I know that funding is being sought for the accessible path to the village hall. Another idea would be a new gateway sign as I am afraid, I have been told that WBC will not fund such replacements. The bid round will open towards the end of the year and bids are awarded in the new year.	

Aldworth Parish Council Clerk – Faye Bates

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Local road improvements: I have worked with residents on a number of road safety improvements over the past year, including:

- Subject to formal consultation, there will be a new speed limit (40mph instead of 60 mph) from the turning to Stichens Green down to the bottom of Streatley Hill which should hopefully improve conditions for the many walkers and golfers who cross at the top of the hill, as well as for cyclists and for pedestrians on the pavement at the bottom of the hill.
- “Single track road” signs have gone up at both entrances to the road through Stichen’s Green.
- A new enhanced junction warning sign at the junction of Aldworth Road and Hook End Road in Upper Basildon
- Officers are also looking at other improvements to signage and other possible measures to assist with discouraging speeding in Upper Basildon.

If there are road safety improvements in the local area that parishioners feel would be beneficial, I would be pleased to take forward, but please note that it will be important to be able to demonstrate significant local support to get them implemented.

The Council’s Highways Department has received a very significant increase in capital funding this year for improvements around the district.

Council wide news

Changes to waste management services: West Berks has increased kerbside recycling this year to include a much wider range of plastic items, as well as batteries. Alongside these changes, it is intended that black bin collections will go to three weekly collections towards the end of this year. Our bins are larger than many other authorities that have switched to three weekly collections and we also collect more items for recycling. However, it is recognised that some residents will struggle and therefore it is intended that it will be possible to apply for a bigger black bin, if needed.

Local plan update: The revised local plan, which has been amended by the inspector, will go before a special meeting of the Full Council on 10 June 2025.

Devolution to Parish Councils: As discussed previously, WBC are developing a new model of funding whereby parishes can buy in certain services from the Council where they are of the view that residents would like an enhanced service, for example, additional drainage cleaning, bin collections or pop-up library services. The idea is that Parish Councils will be more alert to the particular needs of their communities/particular areas. Upper Basildon Council has taken up the proposal to have a pop-up library and I can ask them to share details if this is of interest!

Local Government Reorganisation Update: The Government is looking to reorganise all local authorities into large unitary authorities, as this is thought to be more efficient. There is a proposal being developed for West Berkshire Council to join the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils into a unitary authority, with the proposed name being Ridgeway Council. As I understand it, the proposal will go to the Government in the autumn and there will be a public consultation on the proposals.

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Co-option of new Councillor: There were no candidates put forward for co-option. There is one seat available. Clerk to reissue the advert for a new councillor on the website and noticeboard.	Clerk
Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2024/2025	
The findings of the Internal Auditors Report from Claire Connell were considered and approved. One point was raised as the dates for the exercise of public rights did not include the first 10 working days of July 2024, due to the late completion of the Internal Audit last year by a different auditor. The Annual Governance Statement was approved. The Accounting Statements and the receipts and payments summary were considered and approved. Clerk to send all required documents to the external auditor.	Clerk
Policies/Procedures and Council Documents:	
The Staffing Committee and the terms of reference were reviewed and confirmed. The Standing Orders of Aldworth Parish council were reviewed and confirmed. The Financial Regulations for Aldworth Parish Council were reviewed and confirmed. The Risk Assessment was reviewed and approved. The Asset register was reviewed and approved. All the following policies were reviewed and approved: a. Complaints Policy b. Freedom of Information Policy c. Data Protection Policy d. Media Policy e. Employment Policies (Anti-Bullying / Grievance & Disciplinary / Equality Policies) f. Temporary Scheme of Delegation Policy g. Grant Awarding Policy h. Community Engagement Policy i. Reserves Policy j. Code Of Conduct	
Insurance: The clerk presented two quotes to the council, one from Zurich for £437.00 and the other from Arthur Gallagher Insurance for £850.28. The clerk tried to obtain a further quote from Clear Councils, however, they did not respond. The quote from Zurich was approved.	Clerk
To Confirm the Subscriptions to BALC/HALC/NALC and the Clerk's Membership to SLCC: Approved.	
Standing Orders and Direct Debits: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Village Hall for contribution towards defib electricity, £20.00 due in April 2026. Approved➤ HMRC direct debits. Approved➤ Information Commissions Office direct debit. Approved	



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➤ PWLB direct debit for village hall loan. Approved	
To review the S.137 expenditure incurred for 2024 / 2025 and confirm the 2025 / 2026 values: 25/26 capped at £11.10 per elector, total of £2,519.70. No S137 was spent in 24/25.	
Parking Issue at Westridge Green: One MOP spoke about cars parking at Westridge Green forcing farm machinery/big vehicles to churn up the grass verge as they try to pass the parked vehicles. MOP would like to have 'no parking' signage installed. However, the land which the signs are to be installed on is Yatteneden Estates, therefore the PC believe this is an issue for them to deal with as it is usually their vehicles that are struggling to get past. Cllr. Walters to make contact with Yattenden Estates to discuss.	KW
Matters Arising	
Community Noticeboard: The location has been agreed with the PC and the Village Hall Committee, clerk to order the noticeboard and obtain quotes to have it installed. Tree Survey: This was carried out on the 1 st May 2025. One tree at The Shoulder of Mutton needs to be cut down within 6 months. Tree number 881. Clerk to obtain quotes. Damaged Road Gate: Cllr. Coyle confirmed that WBC would not pay for the repair of the gate. Clerk to obtain quotes. The gate at Westridge Green also needs to be cleaned and painted. Annual Park Inspection: This was carried out by RoSPA on the 28 th April 2025. All findings are low risk. The weeds and stinging nettles need to be cleared from the fence line and the timber has some natural splits which need to be monitored.	Clerk
Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 24/02816/FUL The construction of a building to cover the existing cattle handling yard and cover/roof between two permitted buildings. Bower Farm, Bower Road, Aldworth, Reading. Aldworth PC responded with no objections. Cllr. Walters did not comment due to her pecuniary interest. WBC GRANTED PERMISSION.➤ 25/00218/LBC To replace one rotten window and frame which are both beyond repair. Replacement will be like for like in every respect. Ridgeway House Aldworth Road Streatley Reading RG8 9RF. Aldworth Parish Council responded with no objections. WBC REFUSED permission.➤ 25/00492/HOUSE Replacement garage, Downland Cottage, Aldworth, Reading, RG8 9RL. Aldworth PC responded with no objections. WBC GRANTED PERMISSION.➤ To discuss: 25/00820/CERTE The property known as the Annexe/ Flat, Fayleys Lodge, shown edged red on the plan included with this application has been used since 21 August 2020 as a single dwelling house. I refer to the Statutory Declaration sworn by the applicant and included with this application for full details of the existing use and evidence in support. Flat, Fayleys Lodge, Aldworth, Reading RG8 9RL . Aldworth PC have no objections.	

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Matters for future consideration or suggestion cards from members of public:										
Suggestion cards from MOP: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Ban HGVs from Bell Lane from B4009 crossroads to the Bell Inn- This is not an issue that the PC can deal with, advise MOP to contact the highways team at WBC.➤ Replace one or more of the benches on the playing field- Cllr. Rutter to investigate who owns the benches. The PC will look into replacing the Millennium bench.➤ 20MPH speed limit within the village- This is an ongoing matter which the PC and Cllr Coyle are looking into.										GR
Clerk Report to include finances, correspondence received and matters for attention:										
Monthly Finance Report: Clerk presented to the council, Cllr Walters signed forms for March and April. Clerk to file.										
Current account balance on 5th May 2025: £23,571.99										
CIL Balance on 5th May 2025: £3,635.06 (included in the current account balance).										
Payments due: Claire Connell £150, BALC/NALC £69.89, TFM £6.44, RoSPA £80, TFM for tree survey £660.00.										
VAT Claim: Sent to HMRC on the 2 nd April 2025, £313.56.										
Budget: The clerk presented to the council the budget to date.										
Payments and receipts made since the March meeting:										
17/03/2025	ICO	D/D		£ 47.00				£18,672.22	Subscriptions	
18/03/2025	F.Bates expenses	BACS		£ 70.83		£ 14.17		£18,587.22	Subscriptions	
27/03/2025	Clerk Wages	BACS		£ 899.70				£17,687.52	Clerk Wages & Payroll Admin	
31/03/2025	Service charge			£ 6.00				£17,681.52	Bank Charges	
DATE	Description	Ref /Paymer	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	VAT	Balance	Purpose		
03/04/2025	Aldworth Village Hall Defib Electr	S/O		£ 20.00				£17,661.52	Defib	
10/04/2025	T P Jones Accountants	BACS		£ 65.62		£ 13.12		£17,582.78	Clerk Wages & Payroll Admin	
25/04/2025	HMRC	D/D		£ 152.00				£17,430.78	HMRC Tax	
28/04/2025	Public Works Loan	D/D		£ 599.31				£16,831.47	Loan	
29/04/2025	West Berkshire Council	BACS	£ 6,750.00					£23,581.47	Precept	
29/04/2025	Tactical Facilities Management	BACS		£ 2.90		£ 0.58		£23,577.99	Dog Bins	
30/04/2025	Unity Bank	D/D		£ 6.00				£23,571.99	Bank Charges	
Matters for attention and correspondence received: Nothing to report.										
The councillors will be clearing the vegetation around road signs and cleaning them in the next few weeks.										
To receive further questions or comments from members of the public:										
None										

Meeting closed at 21:20

The 2025 meetings will be held:

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1st July, 2nd September and 4th November at 19.30pm.

Signed: F Bates 7th May 2025

Approved by:
Position:
Date:

DRAFT