



## Minutes of a Meeting of Aldworth Parish Council

held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7pm at Aldworth Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr. Bill Bennetts, Cllr. Graham Rutter and Cllr Kate Walters

**In attendance:** Mel Taylor – Parish Clerk  
District Councillor Laura Coyle  
5 members of public

**05-2026-01 RESOLVED ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN AND APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIRMAN**  
that Cllr Kate Walters be elected Chairman of the Parish Council, and that Cllr Ilona Herbent be appointed Vice Chairman of the Parish Council, for the municipal year 2026/27.

**05-2026-02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Ilona Herbent.

**05-2026-03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
There were no declarations of interest.

**05-2026-04 RESOLVED MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**  
to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 as a true and accurate record.

**05-2026-05 ALDWORTH PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26**  
Cllr Walters presented the Chairman's Annual Report 2025/26, as appended to these minutes.

**05-2026-06 OPEN FORUM**  
**a. Questions or comments from members of the public regarding items on the agenda**  
Following an initial enquiry at the last meeting from a Trustee of the Village Hall regarding whether the Parish Council would consider taking on ownership of the Village Hall, it was requested that the matter be added to the agenda for the next meeting for formal consideration. The Management Committee is an unincorporated entity, but with an annual income of £9,000, decisions are required regarding potential charitable status or a possible transfer to the Parish Council.  
**Action: Parish Clerk to add to the agenda for the next meeting for consideration, and to seek advice from HALC, CCB etc.**

## **b. Update from West Berkshire Council - Councillor Coyle**

- i. Cllr Coyle provided a summary of the year, noting that this had included securing Members' Bid funding towards a replacement Millennium Bench in Aldworth and the installation of two Speed Indicator Devices in Streatley. The introduction of 3-weekly black bin collections had resulted in an increase in recycling rates. Pop-Up Libraries had been introduced in Aldworth and Basildon.

Cllr Coyle also reported that a resident had raised concerns about flooding at Westridge Green, at a culvert beneath the road, and this had been passed to Highways Officers.

- ii. **Consultation on a proposed 20mph zone**

A site meeting had taken place with Cllr Bennetts, Cllr Coyle and a Highways Officer to consider feedback from the initial consultation with residents on the proposed scope of a 20mph area. West Berkshire Council had since changed its approach to proposals across the district and was now inviting Parish Councils to prepare and submit their own proposals, with no set timetable for submission.

Following the site visit, West Berkshire Council proposed to install temporary speed monitoring devices to collect data over a period of time, which would inform assessment of any future 20mph scheme. It was also suggested that improvements to highway infrastructure at the entry and exit points of the village be considered.

- iii. **Responsibility for gully maintenance adjacent to the highway by St Mary's Church**

It had been established that maintenance of the ditch adjacent to the Church was likely to be West Berkshire Council's responsibility, as drainage infrastructure feeds into it. This had been reported to Highways Officers.

- iv. **Local Government Reorganisation**

A decision was expected from central government in July regarding the proposed Ridgeway Council.

## **c. Suggestion Cards from members of public**

There were no suggestion cards.

### **05-2026-07 ST MARY'S CHURCH**

It was noted that St Mary's Church were seeking to raise in excess of £40,000 for essential renovation works, predominantly caused by damp. Councillors considered whether the Parish Council could offer financial support but were mindful of the potential transfer of the Village Hall, which may have financial implications, and were therefore minded not to commit funds at this stage.

### **05-2026-08 UPDATES ON ONGOING MATTERS**

- i. **Vacancy for a Parish Councillor**

The ongoing vacancy for a Parish Councillor was noted.

- ii. **Contribution towards [aldworthvillage.org](http://aldworthvillage.org) domain**

No further updates at this time.

**iii. Aldworth Footpath Leaflet**

**RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of £116.00 to produce 100 copies of the footpath leaflet.

**iv. Recreation Ground bench repairs/replacements**

The 'Aldworth Parish Council' bench had been delivered and installed.

**v. Village Hall footpath enhancement**

It was noted that a grant application was live on The Good Exchange, but no funds had yet been received. Once the busyness of year-end and audit had eased, an application would be submitted to the National Lottery and other funding opportunities would be actively pursued.

**vi. Aldworth Pop-Up Library**

It was reported that the first two libraries had gone well, and new members were signing up.

**vii. The Well**

Confirmation had been received from West Berkshire Council's Legal Team that, following a review of historic title records, The Well on Bell Lane appeared to belong to Aldworth Parish Council. Legal noted that although the current Land Registry title (BK191770) lists West Berkshire Council, the 1982 transfer was between Polarpark Enterprises Inc. and "the Parish Council of Aldworth in the Royal County of Berkshire," and no evidence has been found of any later transfer away from the Parish Council. Legal advice indicated that correcting the Land Registry entry would require a formal transfer back to the Parish Council. WBC confirmed there was no available budget for repairs to this non-designated heritage asset, but Property Services would progress the title transfer, if agreed.

**RESOLVED** to agree that the title of The Well should be transferred to Aldworth Parish Council.

**Action: Parish Clerk to engage with specialist contractors to obtain an assessment of work required and potential costs.**

**viii. Community Litter Pick – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026**

**Action: Cllr Rutter to obtain costs for additional signage.**

**ix. Speed Awareness**

It was felt that this had been addressed during discussions earlier in the meeting.

**05-2026-09 FINANCE**

i. A report for the financial year 2025/26 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026) was noted.

ii. The following payments were approved:

Payee	Amount	Invoice Number & Date	Date Paid	Detail
Playsafety	£99.60 (£83.00+VAT)	97134 06.05.2026	Due	Annual play area inspection
ICO	£47.00	-	17.03.2026	Data Protection annual subscription
M Taylor	£375.36	n/a	24.03.2026	Parish Clerk's Salary – March 2026
Tactical FM	£10.96 (£9.13+VAT)	SI-5154 25.02.2026	24.03.2026	Waste collection February 2026
Tactical FM	£10.96 (£9.13+VAT)	SI-5328 25.03.2026	26.03.2026	Waste collection March 2026
TPJones	£85.92 (£71.60+VAT)	TPJ/P2240 25.03.2026	27.03.2026	Payroll services April 2025 to March 2026
G Rutter	£35.96	n/a	27.03.2026	Easter market activity
Unity Trust Bank	£7.00	-	31.03.2026	Service charge
Aldworth Village Hall	£20.00	n/a	07.04.2026	Contribution towards defibrillator electricity
Tactical FM	£62.04 (£51.70+VAT)	SI-5484 31.03.2026	13.04.2026	Disposal of waste from litter pick
Engraved Benches	£433.00 (£360.83+VAT)	11244 26.03.2026	13.04.2026	'Aldworth Parish Council' bench
PWLB	£590.69	-	27.04.2026	Loan repayment
Unity Trust	£7.00	-	30.04.2026	Service charge

iii. The following contractual payments, Standing Orders and Direct Debits for the year 2026/27 were approved:

M. Taylor	Currently £349.36 (less PAYE) + £26.00 per month	BACS	Parish Clerk's salary + WFH allowance
HMRC	variable	DD	PAYE
Tactical	Inline with agenda item 14	BACS	Waste disposal monthly charge
Public Works Loan Board	variable	DD	Loan repayment
Aldworth Village Hall	£20.00	SO	Annual contribution towards defibrillator electricity cost
Unity Bank	£7.00	DD	Monthly service charge
ICO	£47.00 (2026/27)	DD	Data Protection registration

iv. **Bank Signatories**

It was noted that Cllr Bennetts had been added to the bank mandate, as agreed at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**v. Savings Account**

**RESOLVED** to open a savings account with Unity Trust to benefit from interest payments on the Parish Council's credit balance.  
The account provides instant access and easy transfers to/from the current account.

**vi. BALC / NALC membership**

**RESOLVED** to renew membership of the Berkshire Association of Local Councils and the National Association of Local Councils, for the year 2026/27, at a cost of £76.68, an increase of £6.79 on 2025/26.

**vii. Insurance renewal**

The Parish Council's insurance policy with Zurich was due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026 and a renewal quote of £437.00 had been received, being no change to the premium for 2025/26.

**RESOLVED** to renew the Parish Council's insurance for 2026/27 with Zurich, at a cost of £437.00.

**viii. West Berkshire Council Members' Bids**

It was noted that West Berkshire Council Members' Bids were open for applications until 25th May 2026.

**05-2026-10 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2025/26**

**RESOLVED** to confirm that Aldworth Parish Council meets the qualifying criteria for exemption and wishes to certify itself as exempt from a limited assurance review for financial year 2025/26

**RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Internal Auditor's Report for the financial year 2025/26

**RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement for financial year 2025/26

**RESOLVED** to approve the Accounting Statements for financial year 2025/26

**RESOLVED** to approve the proposed dates for the exercise of public rights as Wednesday 3rd June 2026 to Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026

**05-2026-11 STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, RISK ASSESSMENT AND ASSET REGISTER 2026/27**

**RESOLVED** to adopt Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment and Asset Register for 2026/27, as presented.

**05-2026-12 PLANNING**

- i. Councillors considered planning application 26/00933/HOUSE  
Address: Parsonage Green  
Details: Replacement of existing summerhouse with single storey timber garden studio

**RESOLVED** no objection.

ii. The following planning updates were noted:

Application No.	Address	Details	APC response	WBC determination
25/02907/HOUSE	Whinwhistles	First-floor extension above garage, conversion of garage to habitable accommodation, additional windows and infill of open porch	No objection, subject to *	Approved
26/00234/HOUSE	Glebe Cottage	Rear and side extension with rooms in the roof. Demolition of existing side store and replace with new side entrance, new porch to front	Nil	Approved
26/00076/HOUSE	1 Fayleys Cottages	Demolition of existing garage and erection of a single storey side extension	Object on grounds of disproportionate scale and out of character	Awaiting decision
26/00746/FUL	Bower Farm Bower Road	Construction of lean-to to the sides of the existing cattle building	No comment	Awaiting decision

\* reconsideration of the justification for the windows on the side elevation, which would result in overlooking of neighbouring properties

**05-2026-13 PLAY AREA**

The annual ROSPA safety inspection report was noted, following an inspection of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

**05-2026-14 DOG BINS**

- i. Notification had been received from Tactical Group Ltd of increases in the cost of dog bin and waste bin collections, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026, as follows:

2 x Dog Bins @ £4.61 per bin = £9.22 per month  
 1 x Waste Bin @ £4.61 per bin = £4.61 per month  
 Monthly total: £13.83  
 Annual total: £165.96

An increase of £4.70 on the current monthly cost of £9.13.  
 An annual increase of £56.40 on the current annual cost of £109.56.

A further increase to £4.79 per bin would be implemented at the beginning of 2027.

- ii. Councillors considered whether the current frequency of litter and dog waste bin emptying was sufficient and costs associated with increased emptying:

Monthly emptying: £165.96 per annum – current service  
 Fortnightly emptying: £359.58 per annum  
 Weekly emptying: £719.16 per annum

It was agreed to continue monitoring that bins were being emptied in accordance with the schedule and, if so, it was felt that the current monthly service was sufficient.

- iii. Councillors considered a quote of £300.13 to purchase a replacement dog waste bin for the recreation ground. The cost did not include installation onto an existing post, that also required re-setting.

**RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of £300.13 to purchase a replacement dog bin, plus installation and post re-setting.

**05-2026-15 WESTRIDGE GREEN**

Council had been made aware of flooding and wear-and-tear issues on Westridge Green corner, and noted that these concerns had also been reported to Cllr Laura Coyle who was pursuing within West Berkshire Council, as reported earlier in the meeting.

**05-2026-16 VILLAGE GATEWAY ENTRY SIGNS**

Councillors discussed potential enhancement of the village gateway signage, and it was agreed to obtain quotes and to consider as part of the 20mph project.

**05-2026-17 FURTHER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF PUBLIC AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

Potential transfer of the Village Hall on the next agenda.

**05-2026-18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2026, 7pm at Aldworth Village Hall.

Followed by Mondays 21<sup>st</sup> September 2026, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2026, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2027, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2027 and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2027.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.28pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ALDWORTH PARISH COUNCIL - CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26**

As Chairman of Aldworth Parish Council, I am pleased to present this annual report reflecting on the work and achievements of the Council over the past year.

Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors, our Parish Clerks Faye Bates and Mel Taylor, West Berkshire Councillor Laura Coyle, and all those within the community who have supported the Parish Council throughout the year. Aldworth continues to benefit from residents who care deeply about the village and who regularly contribute ideas, raise concerns, volunteer their time and support local initiatives.

Throughout the year, the Parish Council has continued to focus on maintaining and improving community facilities, supporting local projects and representing residents on local matters affecting the parish.

One of the most significant ongoing themes this year has been road safety and speeding concerns within the village. Residents have continued to raise concerns regarding vehicle speeds, particularly along the main routes through the parish. The Council is working closely with West Berkshire Council and Councillor Laura Coyle regarding the potential introduction of a 20mph zone within the village, and we look forward to further consultation with residents as these proposals develop.

The Council has continued to maintain and improve parish assets during the year. This has included repairs to gates, installation of a new community noticeboard, repainting works at Westridge Green, maintenance within the play area and replacement of the Millennium Bench at the recreation ground. Plans are also progressing to improve the accessibility of the footpath adjacent to the Village Hall and recreation ground. Funding opportunities are actively being explored to support this priority project.

The Parish Council has also supported community enhancement projects, including the planting of daffodil bulbs at Parsonage Green, arrangements for community litter picking events and support for Christmas activities. It has been encouraging to see continued community involvement in these events.

The Council has continued to engage actively with planning matters affecting the parish, carefully considering applications and submitting responses to help preserve the character of Aldworth whilst recognising the need for sympathetic development.

This year has also seen the introduction of a particularly exciting community initiative. Following discussions with West Berkshire Council, the Parish Council agreed to introduce a monthly Pop-Up Library service at Aldworth Village Hall from April 2026. We hope this will become a valuable community resource and an opportunity for residents to access library services locally alongside the village market.

The Parish Council has also continued discussions regarding rural crime coordination with neighbouring parishes and local agencies, supported footpath initiatives and pursued clarification regarding responsibility for local assets and infrastructure, including The Well and drainage matters within the village.

Financially, the Council has remained mindful of balancing community investment with careful management of public funds. During the year, the Council agreed to maintain the Band D council tax calculation at the same level for 2026/27 whilst continuing to support key projects and services for the parish.

Looking ahead, the Council will continue to focus on improving accessibility, supporting road safety initiatives, maintaining parish assets and strengthening opportunities for community engagement and local services.

Finally, I would like to thank all residents who attend meetings, volunteer at events, contribute ideas and support the village throughout the year. Your involvement plays an important part in helping to maintain Aldworth as a thriving and welcoming community.

**Cllr Kate Walters**  
**Chairman**  
**Aldworth Parish Council**