



**Minutes of a Meeting of  
Aldworth Parish Council  
held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7pm at Aldworth Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr. Bill Bennetts, Cllr. Ilona Herbent and Cllr. Graham Rutter

**In attendance:** Mel Taylor – Parish Clerk  
2 members of public

**03-2026-01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Kate Walters (Chairman).

In the absence of the Chairman, the meeting was chaired by Vice Chairman, Cllr Herbent.

**03-2026-02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**03-2026-03 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 as a true and accurate record.

**03-2026-04 OPEN FORUM**

**a. Questions or comments from members of the public regarding items on the agenda**

A Trustee of the Village Hall enquired whether the Parish Council would consider taking on ownership of the Village Hall. It is understood that the hall was originally owned by the Parish Council before being transferred to a Trust. The Parish Council continues to finance the Public Works Loan Board loan taken out for the hall. A Management Committee manages all day-to-day running, and this would continue. Current income covers usual running costs, such as utilities, but it was understood that the Trust is responsible for capital costs relating to the building.

**Action: Parish Clerk to add to the agenda for the next meeting for consideration. Clarity needed on current roles and responsibilities**

*1 member of public left the meeting*

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

Cllr Coyle was unable to attend the meeting but had provided Councillors with a report prior to the meeting.

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

The following suggestion was received:

“Sort the parking out on Bury Lane, it’s gone on long enough.”

It was noted that there is not a Bury Lane in the parish.

**03-2026-05 ALDWORTH POP-UP LIBRARY**

Following agreement at the last meeting to provide a monthly Pop-Up Library at the village market, Councillors reviewed a proposed Service Level Agreement, confirming provision on the first Saturday of each month, commencing 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 10.30am-12pm for a minimum period of 12 months at a cost of £1,935 for the year 2026/27.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Service Level Agreement, as presented, and this was signed by Cllr Bennetts.

**03-2026-06 UPDATES ON ONGOING MATTERS****i. Contribution towards aldworthvillage.org domain**

Following discussions with the current owner of the domain aldworthvillage.org.uk, and prior consideration by the Parish Council regarding its potential transfer, it was proposed that the Parish Council fund a one-year renewal of the domain and hosting at a cost of £120, during which time ownership would be transferred to the Parish Council.

**RESOLVED** to fund the domain aldworthvillage.org.uk and hosting for one year at a cost of £120 and to accept transfer of the domain within that period.

**ii. Aldworth Footpath Leaflet**

Cllr Herment confirmed that the footpaths included in the leaflet had been checked and the information was accurate. It was agreed to go ahead with printing and to seek transfer of the original leaflet file to the Parish Council.

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

Following previous discussion, it was confirmed that there are currently five benches in the recreation ground. Two are understood to be owned by the Cricket Club and in good condition. The Millennium Bench was recently replaced by the Parish Council. Ownership of the remaining two benches is unclear, and both are beyond economical repair. It was noted that the Cricket Club may be considering fundraising to replace one of these benches with a memorial bench for a former member.

As alternative ownership of the remaining bench is unlikely to be established, it was agreed that the Parish Council would arrange for its replacement.

**RESOLVED** to order a replacement bench in the same style as the recently purchased Millennium Bench, to be engraved with "Aldworth Parish Council".

*Post-meeting note: the cost of the replacement bench is the same as the Millennium Bench at £433*

**iv. Village Hall footpath enhancement**

It was noted that a grant application to fund accessibility improvements to the footpath adjacent to the village hall is live on The Good Exchange. The current grant offer from Chilterns National Landscape required projects to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. If, and when, a grant offer for the new financial year goes live, an application will be submitted promptly. Other potential funders are also being explored.

**Action: Parish Clerk to submit a grant application to Chilterns National Landscape should a new grant offer open and continue to explore alternative funding opportunities**

**v. Co-ordination with neighbouring Parish Councils, Police and other agencies on rural crime issues**

Following previous discussion, a QR code had been shared for Councillors to join the Ashampstead Rural Crime WhatsApp group.

**Action: Parish Clerk to resend QR code to Councillors**

**vi. Westridge Green – salt bin & repainting of ‘gateway’**

It was noted that the ‘Gateway’ has been repainted (Minute reference 01-2026-14ii).

West Berkshire Council have approved siting a salt bin on the highway verge next to the post box. The bin and 5 bags of salt are on backorder from Willis & Ainsworth and it was agreed not to site until autumn 2026 to protect the salt from degrading. Cllr Herbent offered to store the bin and salt.

**Action: Parish Clerk to order ownership/refill labels from West Berkshire Council for 3 grit bins**

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

It was noted that the hall is only accessible after 10.30am on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, due to a hirer. Cllr Bennetts to retrieve equipment from storage and leave in the Davey Room, ready to be distributed from outside the hall.

Cllr Rutter confirmed that he has the ‘litter picking’ signs and will put these out on the day.

**Action: Cllr Bennetts to leave litter picking equipment in the Davey Room ahead of Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

**03-2026-07 FINANCE**

- i. A financial report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 was noted and signed by the Vice Chairman. It was noted that a dog bin at the recreation ground needed replacing.

**RESOLVED** to purchase a replacement dog bin at the recreation ground.

**Action: Parish Clerk to obtain costs for increasing frequency of bin emptying**

- ii. The following payments were approved:

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Tactical Facilities Management	Waste collection – January 2026 <b>PAID 09.02.2026</b>	£10.96 (£9.13+VAT)
Tactical Facilities Management	Waste collection – February 2026	£10.96 (£9.13+VAT)
Tactical Facilities Management	Waste collection – March 2026	£10.96 (£9.13+VAT)
ICO	Data Protection Fee annual renewal	£47.00
M Buckle	Leaf clearance in play area <b>PAID 26.01.2026</b>	£50.00
M Buckle	Clean noticeboard, clean and repaint Westridge gateway sign, weed/moss/algae management in play area, jet wash play area Minute reference 01-2026-07iii - quote and agreement to proceed obtained between meetings	£168.50
M Taylor	Clerk’s Salary for January 2026 <b>PAID 09.02.2026</b>	£375.36
M Taylor	Clerk’s Salary for February 2026 <b>PAID 09.03.2026</b>	£375.36

M Taylor	Clerk's Salary for March 2026	£375.36
Aldworth Village Hall	Contribution towards drinks at Village Christmas Party	£160.00
HMRC	PAYE <b>PAID 23.01.2026</b>	£58.43
Unity Trust	Service charge <b>PAID 31.01.2026</b>	£6.00
Unity Trust	Service charge <b>PAID 28.02.2026</b>	£6.00

- iii. Cllr Rutter requested approval to purchase items for an Easter Bunny/Egg Hunt at the Saturday market prior to Easter Sunday [Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April].
- RESOLVED** to approve expenditure of up to £45.00 for an Easter Bunny/Egg Hunt at the village market on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April.

### 03-2026-08 PLANNING

*Cllr. Herment declared an interest in the following agenda item and abstained from discussion and voting*

- i. Councillors considered planning application 26/00076/HOUSE  
Address: 1 Fayley's Cottages  
Details: Demolition of existing garage and erection of a single storey side extension.

- RESOLVED** to object to the application on the grounds of its disproportionate scale and being out of character with the area.  
*Post-meeting note: As Cllr Herment's declaration of interest rendered the Council inquorate for this item, approval of the consultee response was subsequently obtained via email from Cllrs Bennetts, Rutter and Walters.*

- ii. The following planning updates were noted:

Application No.	Address	Details	APC response	WBC determination
25/02749/CERTP	Downland Cottage	Fitting solar panels to the roof	Not consulted	Approved
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 *	Awaiting decision
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	Awaiting decision

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

- iii. It was noted that an appeal against West Berkshire Council's refusal of planning application 25/01462/HOUSE (Apple Tree Cottage – retrospective application for a replacement shed) has been dismissed. The Inspector concluded that “the development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding.”

### 03-2026-09 PLAY AREA

It was noted that confirmation has been received that the annual ROSPA safety inspection is scheduled for April 2026.

### 03-2026-10 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

There were no forthcoming roadworks or highway notifications from West Berkshire Council to report.

**03-2026-11 FURTHER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF PUBLIC AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

It was suggested by a resident that the Parish Council could publicise the planned transition from analogue to digital landlines ahead of the 2027 switchover.

**Action: Cllr Bennetts to research further ahead of the next meeting**

**03-2026-12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026, 7pm at Aldworth Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.29pm.

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

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