



**Minutes of a Meeting of  
Aldworth Parish Council  
held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7pm at Aldworth Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr. Bill Bennetts, Cllr. Ilona Herbent, Cllr. Graham Rutter and Cllr. Kate Walters (Chairman)

**In attendance:** Mel Taylor – Parish Clerk  
Cllr Laura Coyle (West Berkshire District Councillor)  
Elizabeth Beverley (WBC Libraries Manager) and West Berkshire Councillor Nigel Foot  
3 members of public

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

There were no apologies for absence, all Councillors present.

**01-2026-02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**01-2026-03 POP-UP LIBRARY / COMMUNITY BOOKSHELF**

Elizabeth Beverley, West Berkshire Council's Libraries Manager, and Councillor Nigel Foot gave a presentation on opportunities to host either a Pop-Up Library or Community Bookshelf at Aldworth Village Hall.

Elizabeth and Cllr. Foot advised that the mobile library service ended last year and in its place, West Berkshire Council now offers a pop-up library service and community bookshelf scheme to parishes, along with the At Home, home delivery service.

Pop-Up Library:

- Operates once per month for 1–1.5 hour sessions
- Staffed by one WBC officer
- Requires WiFi (Village Hall confirmed as available)
- Residents can reserve specific books online or via the app by selecting “pop-up library,” although reservations are not essential
- Books can be borrowed using a WBC library card (up to 15 books per ticket). New members can sign up at sessions
- Children's Summer Reading Challenge included
- Books may be returned to any library or pop-up location
- West Berkshire Council and Aldworth Parish Council would enter into a Service Agreement for a minimum of one year
- Public Liability Insurance provided by WBC
- WBC will provide promotional leaflets and a storage cabinet, with capacity for approx. 500 books

It may be possible to incorporate other WBC outreach services.

Community Bookshelf:

- Open access, trust-based system (not staffed).
- Books refreshed by WBC four times per year.
- No reservation facility.
- Additional costs may apply for specific book requests.

Examples of local delivery:

- Basildon Pop-Up Library held alongside outreach Post Office service, and Children's Community Bookshelf alongside the toddler group on Mondays. Basildon have recently renewed the pop-up and bookshelf for a further year.
- Leckhampstead Pop-Up Library held monthly on a Wednesday with a coffee morning.
- Compton Pop-Up Library aligned with Family Hub sessions.

Elizabeth had provided an estimated cost prior to the meeting and would confirm all costs in a follow-up email<sup>1</sup>.

*Councillors thanked Elizabeth and Cllr. Foot for their presentation and for answering questions and they left the meeting*

**RESOLVED** A Village Hall Trustee present at the meeting confirmed agreement in principle to proceed and advised that, if incorporated into the Saturday market, the preference would be for the first or fourth market of each month. to proceed with a monthly Pop-Up Library, incorporated into the Saturday market on either the first or fourth Saturday of each month (to be confirmed), commencing April 2026.

**01-2026-04 OPEN FORUM**

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

A question was raised regarding whether the Parish Council could fund highway cleansing, as mud on the road through the village was obscuring the edge of the highway. It was also noted that the road to Upper Basildon required cleansing. Cllr. Laura Coyle agreed to investigate when highway cleansing was last carried out in the village.

**Action: Cllr. Coyle to advise on when highway cleansing was last carried out in the village**

It was mentioned that there was a lot of litter around the village. Litter picking equipment is stored in the loft at the village hall.

---

<sup>1</sup> Post meeting note:

Costs for 2026–27 (including the moveable unit)

The cost of delivering a monthly one-and-a-half-hour pop-up library session at Aldworth Village Hall (12 visits in total), based on staff time, travel, support costs and equipment, would be £1,935 for the period April 2026 to March 2027.

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

Councillor Coyle provided the following updates:

**20mph Zone**

A meeting with the consultant and Parish Council is scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> January. Cllr. Coyle to inform the consultant that additional time is required to consult with the village on the proposed plan, prior to the formal consultation on the final proposal. It is hoped the process will also provide an opportunity to review wider speeding concerns.

Parish Councillors confirmed the Council's support for a 20mph zone through the village.

**The Well – Ownership**

Cllr. Coyle advised that she had not yet had an opportunity to speak with Officers regarding ownership of The Well.

**Ditch Maintenance**

Cllr. Coyle has been provided with information to identify maintenance responsibility of the ditch adjacent to the highway and St Mary's Church.

**Shooting School Planning Application**

The planning application has been refused.

**The Downs School**

The school has become an Academy (Summit Education Trust). A consultation is underway regarding proposed admission changes to prioritise children from primary schools within the Trust, which could impact children from the nearby villages of Streatley, Yattendon and other non-Trust schools.

**Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

The Ridgeway Council proposal has been submitted to Government by West Berkshire, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Councils.

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

The following suggestion was received:

“The recreation ground should be opened to accommodate extra parking for village functions, for example Christmas Carols at The Bell.”

The Village Hall car park is for use by the village hall and the pub, and whilst not a Parish Council matter, Cllr. Bennetts offered to liaise with the pub and village hall on occasions when additional car parking was needed for village events.

**01-2026-05 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025 as a true and accurate record.

## 01-2026-06 UPDATES ON ONGOING MATTERS

### i. Contribution towards **aldworthvillage.org** domain

Cllr. Bennetts advised that communication was ongoing with the current owner of the domain and it had been established that the Council had previously covered website costs until approximately 10 years ago. Recharges were submitted to the Parish Council in 2013 for 2014, with none received since.

The domain renewal cost for 2024 & 2025 was £24 per year, and it was agreed to reimburse £48 and to seek transfer of the domain to the Parish Council.

It was noted that additional hosting arrangements may exist, although it is unclear at this stage whether these are included within current costs.

**Action: Cllr. Bennetts to liaise further regarding historic hosting costs (potentially £120 per annum for 11 years) and the transfer of the .org.uk domain and website to the Parish Council.**

### ii. The Village Well ownership

West Berkshire Council Officers are liaising internally to establish the appropriate team to address maintenance of The Well.

### iii. Recreation Ground bench repairs/replacements

A condition survey was undertaken and a report provided. All but two of the benches were identified as the responsibility of the Cricket Club.

Ownership of the remaining two benches remained unclear.

**Action: Cllr. Rutter to map out location of benches and take photographs. Parish Clerk to obtain quotes to repair and replace.**

### iv. Replacement Millenium Bench

Delivered and sited on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

### v. Aldworth Footpath Leaflet

**Action: Cllrs. Herbert & Rutter to walk the footpaths to check condition and accessibility and to report any works required to West Berkshire Council and Cllr. Coyle, who offered to liaise with the footpaths Officer.**

### vi. Village Hall footpath enhancement

A quote has been received for £22,633 for accessibility enhancements to the footpath to the village hall, adjacent to the highway. A proposal is being written for submission to potential funders, including Greenham Trust / The Good Exchange and Chilterns National Landscape.

**Action: Parish Clerk to check if quote includes moving fence line, and to pursue funding.**

### vii. Ownership and responsibility for maintenance of gully between the church and highway

As per Cllr. Coyle's report under minute reference 01-2026-04b.

### viii. Proposed introduction of 20mph zone

As per Cllr. Coyle's report under minute reference 01-2026-04b.

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

The Parish Clerk contacted Ashampstead, Yattendon, Hampstead Norreys and Compton Parish Councils to gauge interest in establishing a WhatsApp group, as discussed at the last meeting.

The coordinator of the Ashampstead Rural Crime Group, and Ashampstead Parish Councillor, has proposed expanding their existing WhatsApp group to include Aldworth. Membership would not be widened further, other than to include Parish Clerks or rural crime coordinators from Yattendon, Hampstead Norreys and Compton.

**Action: Parish Clerk, Parish Councillors and Cllr. Coyle to join the Ashampstead Rural Crime WhatsApp group and share relevant information to Aldworth groups as appropriate.**

**01-2026-07 FINANCE**

- i. Cllr. Bennetts offered to be added to the bank mandate to provide additional availability of authorised signatories.

**RESOLVED** to add Cllr. Bennetts to the bank mandate.

- ii. It was noted that Unity Trust's monthly bank charge will increase from £6.00 per month to £7.00 per month with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026.

- iii. A financial report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 was noted and signed by the Chairman.

**Action: Parish Clerk to request a quote to clean algae from play equipment and clean the noticeboard and bench by The Well.**

- iv. The following payments since the last meeting were approved:

<b>Date Paid</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Amount</b>
31.10.2025	Unity Trust	Service charge October 2025	£6.00
30.11.2025	Unity Trust	Service charge October 2025	£6.00
02.12.2025	Engraved Bench co uk	Millenium memorial bench	£433.00 (£360.83+VAT)
02.12.2025	M Taylor	Clerk's Salary for part-October and November 2025	£616.56
04.12.2025	G Rutter	Reimbursement for Craft activity for Christmas Party	£45.00
09.12.2025	F Bates	[former] Clerk's Salary part-October 2025	£134.40
09.12.2025	TEEC	Email/website domain and hosting	£223.20 (£186.00+VAT)
09.01.2026	Tactical Facilities Management	Waste collection – November 2025	£10.96 (£9.13+VAT)
09.01.2026	Tactical Facilities Management	Waste collection – December 2025	£10.96 (£9.13+VAT)
09.01.2026	M Taylor	Clerk's Salary for December 2025	£375.36

**01-2026-08 THE WELL**

Councillors considered a recently highlighted issue of notices being attached to The Well which could potentially damage the heritage asset, and it was agreed to monitor the situation.

**01-2026-09 WB081: NOTICE OF CLAIMED PUBLIC FOOTPATH ORDER: WESTRIDGE GREEN, ALDWORTH, RG8 9RJ**

Notification was received from West Berkshire Council of a claimed public footpath order, following a request from Aldworth Parish Council in 2023. The Notice is currently open for public consultation until 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026. If no objections are received by West Berkshire Council during the consultation, the footpath will be added to definitive map.

**01-2026-10 TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 1089**

It was noted that on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 West Berkshire Council confirmed a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on a Lime Tree at Glebe Cottage, Aldworth. Originally 2 trees were subject to the proposed TPO, but notification was received during the consultation period that 1 yew tree had been felled prior to service of the TPO. The TPO was now confirmed on the remaining lime tree.

**01-2026-11 COMMUNITY LITTER PICKING 2026**

This year's community litter pick was confirmed for Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026, with details the same as in 2025.

**01-2026-12 PLANNING**

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

**i. Councillors considered planning application 25/02907/HOUSE**

Address: Whinwhistles

Details: First floor extension above garage, conversion of garage to habitable accommodation, additional windows and infill of open porch.

**RESOLVED** No objection, subject to reconsideration of the justification for the windows on the side elevation, which would result in overlooking of neighbouring properties.

**ii. The following planning updates since the last meeting were noted:**

Application No.	Address	Details	APC response	WBC determination
25/02355/TPC	Aldworth Village Hall	Tree 5 – Beech – Crown reduction and crown lift to alleviate impact on playground and solar panels	Support	No Objection Raised
25/02332/TPC	Glebe Cottage	2 x Sycamore: Fell	No Objection	No Objection Raised
25/02657/HOUSE	Old Barn	Proposed outbuilding, to house swimming pool	Nil	Approved
25/02749/CERTP	Downland Cottage	Fitting solar panels to the roof	Not consulted	Not yet determined
25/02367/LBC	The Bell	Replacement of lower windows to the south elevation of the property with bespoke like for like windows	Nil	Approved

**01-2026-13 HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

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

**01-2026-14 WESTRIDGE GREEN**

**i. Council considered a request for a salt bin at Westridge Green from residents concerned about the icy condition during recent cold weather.**

**RESOLVED** to approve the provision of a salt bin, subject to approval from West Berkshire Council Highways.

- ii. Council considered a request for the white gate adjacent to the highway at the entry point to Westridge Green to be repainted, and it was agreed to obtain a quote.

**01-2026-15 IT POLICY**

Councillors considered a draft IT Policy.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the IT policy, as presented.

**01-2026-16 BUDGET 2026/27**

Councillors reviewed a draft budget for 2026/27.

**RESOLVED** to retain the Band D council tax calculation at the same level as 2025/26; to issue a precept request to West Berkshire Council for £13,441; and to adopt the budget as amended to reflect the precept and include funding for the Pop-Up Library, as set out in appendix I to these minutes.

**01-2026-17 FURTHER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF PUBLIC AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

There were no further questions or comments from members of public and no suggestions for the next agenda.

**01-2026-18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 7pm at Aldworth Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.04pm.

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

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