

Westcott Parish Council

Amanda Ludlow – Clerk

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Meeting Minutes

28th January 2025 1930hrs at Westcott Cricket Club

Attendees

Parish Councillors

Cllr Sue Pusey	Chair	SP	Cllr Jo Hooper	JH
Cllr Tony Wilkinson	Vice Chair	TW	Cllr Sue Lacey	SL
Cllr Grahame Pusey		GP		

Ward Councillors

Cllr Ashley Waite	AW
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Officer of the Council

Amanda Ludlow	AL
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Agenda Point		Person /s to action
	Part One Meeting opened at 1930hrs	
132	Apologies for Absence Cllr Elizabeth Atkinson EA	
133	Open Forum SP welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and explained the proceedings of the meeting to all present. Nick Payne from Woodham attended to request the support of the parish Council in applying for the recent ASDA grant to create an outdoor meeting place for the villagers of Woodham. As they are not large enough to have a Council, they would like their Parish Meet represented. This is placed on the agenda for discussion. AL confirmed that the council does have a safeguarding policy as per Nicks previous questions in an email. SP acknowledged the request and to support the local community.	
134.	Declarations of Interest None	

135	Approval Of Minutes All Cllrs present approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th of December 2024. SP signed final filed copy	
136	Matters Arising Spreadsheet of action list shared ahead of the meeting. JH has been in touch with Transport regarding the bus route to Westcott. It transpires the bus driver decided to not take the planned route on the day mentioned in previous minutes. Following contact with the council the subsidy has been removed for that occasion. No further missed routes have occurred since that time. JH to send details to AL for summary to go to Cllr Gomm of Quainton. SID company contacted by AL and a software update has been given. This is required to now update both SID's once their batteries are fully charged, and the system needs to be reset. GP to take forwards.	JH GP
137.	Clerk's Report 25th January 2025 1. Action points tracker spreadsheet updated and shared and sent with Minutes ahead of the meeting I. Waddesdon Fires update – information received from Cllr JH and logged on record. II. LED lighting quotes – not yet completed III. Members allowances to be publicised on Website. Email sent to Democracy inbox as requested by Bucks Council IV. To contact Cllr P Gomm re bus route via Quainton and sudden cancellations V. No response to date from Oxford Diocese re cutting of the school hedge 2. Burial Ground All burial records now received and will be audited in the next 4 weeks. USB stick from prior clerk was not in the bag with records and is currently being located or will be resent. GDPR does not cover people's data who are deceased. 3. Senior Residents Christmas meal / Easter Afternoon Tea 22 residents arrived (2 hadn't booked but were squeezed in) Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and all were interested and pleased about having another get together in Easter.	

	Provisional date of 10th April to host an Easter afternoon Tea at the Cricket club (awaiting confirmation of availability). Volunteers already coming forward for food provision and support. I will go to local businesses for raffle prizes. This date falls within the school holidays, so I am hopeful of younger helpers coming along to support with us. Santa collection raised £326.41 which I will bank in the forthcoming week and collected a large number of items for the Food Bank. A big thankyou to the volunteers and Santa who braved the cold and wet to do an outstanding job in getting to knock those doors! 4. Budget and Precept calculation To be finalised at this meeting. Budgets shared and tax base calculation information shared from Bucks Council 5. Bucks recycling cage collection Christmas tree collection completed. Cllr SP following up the original agreement of three items at the resident's home versus have collection points in the village that may encourage fly tipping and not be traceable to individuals 6. Thames Valley Police Ongoing communications between Susan Goodway and myself. An issues or concerns that are non-urgent should be sent to: waddesdonNHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk New personnel contacts and photos placed on notice board 7. Archiving All archiving completed and stored at my address safely and securely Once updated I will share the archiving and data retention policy for Westcott with all for ratification at the next meeting 8. Waddesdon, Westcott and Winchendon Newsletter. I will contact and submit an update following the next meeting 9. Westcott Church I will share the update when I receive it	SP
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	10. Grass cutting contract Village green grass cutting contract for 3 years was awarded and commenced in May 2024. Due to economy of scale and value for money to us, the existing contractor can complete the devolved work on a monthly basis throughout the village as indicated and annual cut of station Rd hedge near Quainton. Devolved verges and hedges in the village with 10% discount for £2520 plus VAT. Monthly cut From April to the end of October. Hedge on Station Road to be £250 plus VAT annually. Footpath cited in annual clearance is currently impassable and quote received from Charles Connor of £3000 for 4 to 5 days work for 2 people to complete. I am meeting with the Local Area Technician (LAT) on Monday 27th to walk round the village and to discuss this hedge to see if Bucks Council can rectify this or fund us to do so. Annual care once cut will not be significant. I propose regular contract reviews with Blades and retender for a three year commencing Spring 2028 inclusive of all grass cutting requirements. The council have confirmed that in 2016 – 2019 the figure awarded was £1189.19 per annum. 11. Town and Parish Clerks Forum I attended this meeting on the 21st of January at the Gateway. I will share the minutes when I receive them, but the meeting focussed on the Highways department, and I was able to make contact with our Local Area Technician (LAT) Colin Woolford who will be walking the Village with Cllr SP and myself on Monday 27th at 9am to discuss any issues and talk about the flooding experienced in early December. 12. Wastebusters Flyer received from Bucks Council and partners looking for volunteers – placed on Notice Board 13. Elections The next scheduled local elections in Buckinghamshire will take place on Thursday 1 May 2025. All parish council seats will be up for election (see appendix 1). All of Buckinghamshire Council's 97 seats, in each of the 49 wards, will also	AL
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be up for election (see appendix 2), reflecting the changes from the Local Government Boundary Commission's electoral review.

The Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer is Sarah Ashmead, who is responsible for election delivery.

Election Timetable

- Publication of Notice of Election Tuesday 18 March 2025
- Nomination delivery from 10am Tuesday 18 March 2025
- Nomination delivery deadline 4pm Wednesday 2 April 2025
- Last day for registration Friday 11 April 2025
- Postal vote application deadline Monday 14 April 2025
- Bank Holiday (Good Friday) Friday 18 April 2025
- Bank Holiday (Easter Monday) Monday 21 April 2025
- Proxy vote application deadline Wednesday 23 April 2025
- VAC application deadline Wednesday 23 April 2025
- Polling day (contested polls only) Thursday 1 May 2025
- Verification and count Friday 2 May 2025 (Stoke Mandeville Stadium)

Submission of Nomination Papers

Nomination papers must be hand delivered to a Deputy Returning Officer at The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF weekdays between 10am-4pm from 10am Tuesday 18 March and no later than 4pm on Wednesday 2 April 2025.

Electoral Commission guidance

Candidates should check the Electoral Commission guidance to check their eligibility to stand for election before completing their nomination papers: Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they are eligible to stand for election and are not disqualified. Parish Clerks or Electoral Services cannot confirm if a candidate is eligible or disqualified from standing for election.

Nomination papers

Candidates should use the nomination papers provided by the Electoral Commission which consist of the following forms:

1a: Nomination paper

1b: Home address form (part 1 and part 2)

1c: Candidate's consent to nomination (including the pages of legislation)

Optional:

2: Certificate of authorisation (required to use a political party name or description)

3: Request for a party emblem (required to use a political party's emblem)

4: Notification of election agent (unitary elections only)

The Electoral Commission template nomination forms are available via the following links:

- Parish nomination papers:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-parish-council-elections-england/nominations/completing-your-nomination-papers>

	• Unitary nomination papers: https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england/nominations/completing-your-nomination-papers/nomination-form <u>Parish election re-charges</u> As in previous years, Buckinghamshire Council will recharge parish councils the actual costs for the parish elections in May 2025. Since this is combined with the Buckinghamshire Council unitary elections, recharges will only include the parish proportion of the costs. 14. External Audit External Audit outcome awaited, all information given as requested and apologies given for the delay in undertaking the internal audit, minuting and displaying the exercise of public rights in July 2024. Variances of accounts explained to the best of my ability. They have advised that 'other matters' will also be raised subject to Engagement Lead approval: * We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2024/25 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not include the first 10 working days of July. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2025/26. * In the prior year, the smaller authority was exempt from our review, thus we have not reviewed any evidence to support the prior year comparatives on the AGAR. * In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to Internal Control Objective M. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner. I have been assured that as long as we follow protocol this coming financial year we will not be subject to an external audit. This of course depends on the income threshold not being breached as it was in 23/24 due to an overpayment of Precept. Buckinghamshire County Council have confirmed they will pay these audit fees once invoiced and paid by us as it was caused in the main by their overpayment of precept.	AL
138.	Reports I. <u>Burial Ground & Churchyard</u> Burial records received. Full audit to be completed	AL

	II. <u>Website / email</u> Link shared by JH to view the website. https://hutsixdev.co.uk/westcottpc/ All councillors to view and send comments by Monday the 3rd February. JH / SP / AL to meet to decide next steps III. <u>Village Green</u> See separate agenda item. SL raised that the playground surface looks like it is being pulled up again in places and fragments of it laid around the playground. IV. <u>Charities</u> Nothing to raise V. <u>Buckinghamshire Council</u> Cllr AW updated all present on HS2. Fleet Marston flooding continues under the bridge due to the height of the river affecting the road as the road is lower. The river requires dredging, and the Rivers Trust have been asked to look at this. Waddesdon Hill road will be closed from the 7th February to the 28th February to join the new road to the new roundabout. Diversion routes in place that don't include Westcott although all agreed Westcott will experience higher levels of traffic through this period. Fleet Marston roundabout (near HS2 compound) will be removed by the end of 2025. Concerns raised re HGV access through Westcott. AW stated there are signs on order and he has reported this to the LAT. SP stated that the LAT has not received this as she raised it during the conversation with CW on the 27th of January when he walked the village with SP and AL. No access to Westcott venture park signs to be looked into -? WVP to fund AW has not chased the temporary building by Bucks recycling yet but will share the case number once reported.	ALL JH/ SP/AL AW ALL AW
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	AW has contacted the councillor regarding the council land at Lower green – JH to update as per agenda Community Board funding about to close. They should be able to support regarding the defibrillator purchase. Elections – Currently Waddesdon, Westcott, Ashendon, Wooton, Brill and Oakley are a three member ward and this will reduce to a one member ward. AW confirmed he will be standing as the conservative candidate. Santa runs went well across the area. A big thankyou to GP for upgrading the Santa shed. The Bernwode bus charity is closing and will become accessible through the I'd like to borrow organisation – I'd like to borrow; I'd like a bike and now I'd like a bus.	
VI.	<u>Speed Watch</u> Traffic Technology contacted and prepared new DSD Firmware updates. He has sent the updates and instructions on how to load them onto the devices. GP to follow up	GP
VII.	<u>Bucks Recycling</u> Xmas trees collected from the agreed collection point in the village No further meetings since the last meeting. SP to follow up the managed collection of small items proposed by Bucks recycling last year. All confirmed that they do not want to have piles of recycling positioned around the village for collection as no one would be aware of who's item was whose and it would potentially promote fly tipping. AW to attend with enforcement regarding the temporary building that is lit across 24 hrs a day.	SP AW
VIII.	<u>Venture Park</u> No meetings held this month Issues of sewerage in Burnham Road acted on quickly by the Venture Park when a blockage occurred recently. SP and AW have met John Westward the new operations manager for Savills	
IX.	<u>Other</u> Church Update 28.1.25 Following my appeal before Christmas for volunteers to step up to support the running of a carol service, there were no offers of help,	

	which meant that sadly, the service was not able to be held this year in Westcott. As previously explained, I am hoping that there will be sufficient support to keep the monthly Family Communion service going at Westcott on the first Sunday of every month. A small congregation are emerging again and there have been some kind offers of support to keep this church open one a month. We received the Quinquennial inspection report just before Christmas and we were not surprised to learn that a large-scale project to renovate the ceiling and repair the roof will be needed. This would be a project in which we will need to reach out to the village and seek support to move this project forward, not only in terms of fundraising but also in applying for relevant grants and heritage funds to bring this about. The church is currently usable, with the protective netting on the ceiling, but this is only a temporary solution. The main challenge is the parish church having the personnel to move this project forward (no current churchwarden or PCC officers representing Westcott on the PCC (church council) so the situation is not easy and progress is likely to be delayed. The question will be how much the village value their church. There were no requests for funerals in church at Westcott in 2024, no weddings and just 2 baptisms. For my part, I am committed to the principle of keeping rural churches open in every parish, but I am also very aware of clergy being spread very thinly and being asked to concentrate on areas where there is the most pastoral need and missional opportunities. We need to continue to demonstrate that a church is needed in Westcott and then there is more likelihood of ministry being maintained there for the future. Revd Caroline Wainman							
139.	Finance Cllrs noted the financial report sent prior to the meeting. Bank accounts as at 25.01.24 <table><tr><td>Current Account</td><td>£27322.97</td></tr><tr><td>Savings Account</td><td>£11474.22</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>£38797.19</td></tr></table> Santa payment of £326.41 to be deposited £100 to be paid to Cllr SP for second half of her chairman’s allowance AL salary to be paid in February Cricket club room hire invoice of £400 to be paid. All present agreed these payments.	Current Account	£27322.97	Savings Account	£11474.22	Total	£38797.19	AL
Current Account	£27322.97							
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	Westcott Cricket club have notified us of increased hire costs from January this year – now to be £25 per hour for 2025.																									
140	Proposed Budget 25 / 26 and Precept Submission Proposed budget and Precept examples shared ahead of the meeting. Budget forecast to end of this financial year attached with proposed budget figures in column O totalling £17998. Does include £2770 per annum of devolved costs for annual hedge at station road and verges and hedges but not footpath clearance costs (quoted £3k) Admin costs £6270 Maintenance costs £11478 Nothing in for special projects at this point. 24/25 Budget and precept was £15149 with £1000 on special projects <u>25/26 Precept :</u> Precept calculation spreadsheet – 3 options <table><tr><td>1.</td><td>Keep same</td><td>£15149</td><td>No difference to 24/25</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Band D Tax estimate</td><td>£85.87</td><td>Deficit to budget of £2849</td></tr><tr><td>2.</td><td>Add 5%</td><td>£15906.45</td><td>Increase of £757.45</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Band D tax estimate</td><td>£90.16</td><td>Deficit to budget of £2091.55</td></tr><tr><td>3.</td><td>Add 10 %</td><td>£16663.90</td><td>Increase of £1514.9</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Band D Tax estimate</td><td>£94.46</td><td>Deficit to budget of £1334.10</td></tr></table> <u>Income 25/26 :</u> Devolved services have said we should receive at least £1183.19 pa Santa collection £300 Burials / memorials approx. £500 VAT reclaim £1000 to date Bucks Council repay for external audit £474 All present agreed to submit for the Precept with a 5% uplift proposal. This will mean going into our financial reserves for this coming year. Utility bills remain unknown at this time. AL to submit the 5% uplift Precept request Budget sheet to be used at each Parish Council meeting from April to enable easier forecasting for next year.	1.	Keep same	£15149	No difference to 24/25		Band D Tax estimate	£85.87	Deficit to budget of £2849	2.	Add 5%	£15906.45	Increase of £757.45		Band D tax estimate	£90.16	Deficit to budget of £2091.55	3.	Add 10 %	£16663.90	Increase of £1514.9		Band D Tax estimate	£94.46	Deficit to budget of £1334.10	AL
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141.	Planning Matters Planning Register shared prior to the meeting.																									

	24/03837/VRC Westcott Venture Park Variation of condition to place cabling and control cabinet to ground mounted solar panels. No objections 24/03262/APP Hogshaw road, Granborough Battery Energy Storage System Objection to be submitted in line with objections to the 2 previous applications. 25/00190/APP Land to north east of Ashendon Rd, Westcott. Proposal for the pedestrian dropped kerb to be enlarged to a larger dropped kerb to enable a vehicular crossover to entry of a field. Discussions took place between the councillors and an objection to be submitted on the following grounds: Recent archaeological investigations found a medieval water management system present in this field and previous pond sites. Application form states no risk of flooding to the site. There are large areas of water in this field which always fill at this time of year. The proposal states the field is not in 20m of a watercourse, stream or beck. There is a waterlogged ditch at the front of the field. The proposed entrance to the field appears excessive for the size of the field and the existing plans do not represent the current site and drop kerb which is opposite the turn into Westcott farm buildings. 24/03305/APP Westcott Venture Park 1x drone cage enclosure (10mx10mx10m). No update on the Council website. AW to follow up.	AL AL AW
142.	Village Green Enhancement JH update all present that Holdsworth's (appointed Contractor) contacted the parish Council late December stating they had experienced a bereavement and pulled out of the agreement but wished to defer the date. JH responded and suggested a March date but has not received any contact back from them. JH has identified reputable landscapers and would propose a new tender for the project to include tree and hedge planting before the end of march, Hard landscaping and a survey to identify hazards prior to works being carried out. This could be in a single tender or 2 different tenders. JH to send all details to AL	JH
143.	Defibrillator British Heart Foundation have contacted JH to state no fully funded defibrillators available, however we can purchase one at a reduced rate.	

	Elaine Hassall to be contacted regarding funding options	AL
	Quote to be obtained for installation of the defibrillator.	AL
144.	Land at Lower Green Email received from John Grossart at Bucks Council “I have confirmation that in principle the Council is happy to hand over the ownership/management of the piece of land it owns to the PC. I’m afraid I can’t be of help with a decision from Fairhive Homes, but it appears from your email below that you may have a way forward with the benefit of in principle agreement with the Council.” JH has identified a Fairhive contact who has responded to us and is currently investigating our query.	
145.	Devolved Grass Cutting On preparing the tender for grass cutting, records show that Blades was awarded a three year contract in April 2024 . Simon, the owner of Blades walked the village with AL and quoted the following: My suggestion is for this to be undertaken once per month between April and October inclusive Areas to be cut will cut with commercial out-front mower, with strimming round obstacles and blowing of clippings of paths where required Total cost would be £2800 plus vat per season for the 7 cuts As discussed, if this was absorbed into the current contract cost can be reduced to £2520 plus vat (10% discount) Therefore, it was agreed that an amendment to Blades contract would be made to include all devolved verges in the village for an additional £2520 per year. To be reviewed annually and a new tender for the full grass cutting for the village for April 2027. This is dependent on Bucks Council agreeing to the Devolved services going ahead. There are two annual clearance areas on the devolved map. 1. Hedge along station road leading to Quainton. This will require a hedge cutter and Blades have quoted £250 per year 2. Footpath along WVP fence at the further end of the village green. This is currently impassable and a quote of £3k received from Charlie Connor to clear the footpath. Colin Woolford – Bucks Local Area Technician – walked the village on Monday with SP and AL. He feels that this level of work should not be down to the Parish Council, and he will make enquiries as to how we proceed.	AL

146.	School site Tenants are now in the property. The Councillors asked if these tenants are paying council tax? AL to ask AW. They are using Biffa Waste bins not Bucks Council bins. The hedges remain uncut, and no response received regarding this. AL to follow up	AL AL
147.	Easter Afternoon tea for the Senior residents of Westcott Village Easter afternoon tea to be held on the 10th April in the afternoon for all senior residents in the village. Several volunteers for cake making and support have come forwards. Cricket club is provisionally available and to be booked AL to seek raffle prizes and sponsorship support for local businesses. Further planning and advertisement to be undertaken	AL AL
148.	Village Plan Was raised at the last meeting and to be looked at moving forwards. Long Crendon are having an open viewing session of their village plan on the 1st February. AL and JH agreed to attend if able. To be on future agendas	AL / JH AL
149.	Flooding Following the parish Clerks meeting and subsequent follow up with Colin Woolford he has been looking into the flooding issues on Westcott and has communicated the following: Colin will look at ditch clearance in Lower green near the council bungalows but will have to leave the clearance matter on the side of the ditch as per guidelines. Colin confirmed that there are currently no outstanding drainage works to be carried out in Westcott. There is an annual gully clean that will take place at some point this year. Currently he does not have a programme of works so can't give a date for this moment. Last year this took place in April. Colin did have the gullies clean and jetted at the south junction of Linnet Drive and the culvert under the road jetted to the ditch back in April, this was an additional job to the cyclic cleaning and there were no issues found. Colin then checked the asset register, Buckinghamshire Public Flood Asset Register and it shows that the gullies along Linnet Drive are a Bucks asset. Very	

	strange for a private road. But as these are showing as an asset he can get them cleaned. Colin will obtain landowner details and Parish Council will contact all to ensure all ditches are cleaned before the 1st April and Bucks Council works being carried out after that date. JH raised revisiting the emergency response team should flooding recur in the future – to be put on next agenda	AL
150.	Section 106 funding Concerns raised by Westcott Cricket Club regarding amounts of monies stated and challenge the decision of the parish Council to pivot monies. Emails read out from Peter Smith, Westcott Cricket Club highlighting their concerns raised as he wasn't able to attend the meeting. The section 106 monies can be applied for in stages and have a ten-year life span to draw down on. However, if funding is applied for it must have the project completed in the same financial year as application. All quotes and scope of project must be received and will be added into any application that the Parish Council must make. SP stated that it would be helpful to indicate the level of funding for the Cricket Club to enable them to apply for match funding elsewhere. SP proposed a fund of £5000. TW raised the question regarding a private members club accessing community funding. JH said there are no issues with that. Other current projects for the Parish Council are the village green enhancements, the playground / adult exercise areas, land at lower green and the Cricket Club. JH proposed identifying ring-fenced monies for the cricket club and identifying alternative funding to achieve the projects they have SP expressed concern that the Cricket Club feel unsupported and even obstructed by the parish Council. A face to face meeting to be held between the Parish Council and Cricket Club to discuss further. AL to arrange.	AL
151.	ASDA foundation for transforming and improvement of community spaces EA not present to discuss this agenda item due to sickness However, funding deadline was 27.01.25 so now past. AL will ensure the Council is aware of further funding coming from them on the future.	AL

152.	Urgent matters of note Streetlight out in Lower Green has been reported and is not fixed at the time of the meeting.	
153.	Date of next meeting: Tuesday 4 th March 2025 at 1930hrs at Westcott Cricket Club	
	Part 1 of the meeting closed at 2126 hrs	

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Date Agreed:

Signed:

Position: – Chair/Vice Chair/Councillor