

Westcott Parish Council

Amanda Ludlow – Clerk

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www.westcottparishcouncil.gov.uk

Meeting Minutes

6th May 2025 1930hrs at Westcott Cricket Club

Attendees

Parish Councillors

Cllr Sue Pusey	SP	Cllr Jo Hooper	JH
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	
1	Open Forum SP welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and explained the proceedings of the meeting to all present. 1 member of the public was in attendance Bulge in Lower Green road has improved as Thames Water have been out to try and resolve.	
2	Election of Chairperson of the Parish Council Cllr Suzanne Pusey was nominated to continue in the role of Chairperson by Cllr Jo Hooper. Seconded by Cllr Sue Lacey. Declaration of Acceptance of Office (Chair) completed and Signed	
3	Election of Vice Chairperson of the Parish Council Cllr Tony Wilkinson was nominated to continue in the role of vice chairperson by Cllr Grahame Pusey and Seconded by Cllr Sue Lacey.	

	As TW was absent at this meeting AL to give him the associated form to sign before the next meeting.	AL
4	Apologies for Absence Cllr Tony Wilkinson TW Absent but no apologies	
5	Completion of Register of Interests Forms SP, JH, SL, GP all completed new Register of Councillor Interests forms. TW to complete ASAP and return to AL All form to be scanned and sent to Bucks County Council Democratic Services on receipt of TW form.	TW AL
6	To record return of Expenses and Declarations. Forms to be completed by all councillors even for a nil return SP shared a copy of the form – AL will scan and share with SL and TW. SP and GP have already submitted forms	AL / SL / TW JH / SL / AW
7	Councillor Vacancies Following an uncontested Election there are now 2 vacancies – to be on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting	AL
8	Review and Adoption of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and all other Council Policies, Procedures and Practices <u>Updated Standing orders:</u> reviewed and accepted. Updated in Line with NALC model standing orders. Main change is reflecting the recent Government Gender Guidance. To be dated and uploaded to Website. <u>Financial Regulations:</u> Reviewed and accepted. To be uploaded to website <u>Council Policies and procedures:</u> Code of Conduct Community Engagement Statement of Intent Complaints Policy Data Protection Policy Privacy Notice Safeguarding Policy Archiving Policy Reviewed and accepted To be uploaded to Website	AL / JH AL / JH AL / JH

9	Review and Agree Parish Council Representation on External Bodies. Beck and Fetto Charity – currently no representative due to prior representative not standing for election. William Turner Charity – TW Faith Beaumont Charity – TW Bucks recycling – SP / SL Community Board – SP / JH	
10	Confirm arrangements for insurance cover Current Insurance is with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited for the period of 1 st September 2024 to the 31 st August 2025. Insurance remains appropriate. Employers Liability £10,000,000. Public Liability Insurance £10, 000,000. Insurance already included £5000 for defibrillator. AL has contacted the insurance company and advised change of Clerk details. AL to seek quotes for the renewal process in July 2025	AL
11	Meeting dates for 2025 / 2026 The following meeting dates were confirmed: 27th May 25 Annual Parish Meeting 17th June 25 Parish Council Meeting 29th July 25 Parish Council Meeting 9th September 25 Parish Council Meeting 21st October 25 Parish Council Meeting 2nd December 25 Parish Council Meeting 13th January 26 Parish Council Meeting 17th February 26 Parish Council Meeting 31st March 26 Parish Council Meeting 12th May 26 Annual Parish Council Meeting 26th May 26 Annual Parish Meeting JH to place on website	JH
12	Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th April 25 All agreed and SP signed final filed copy	
13	Matters Arising (not contained within reports) Spreadsheet of action list shared ahead of the meeting. SID updates still required. Enforcement case open on the temporary building to be followed up by AW. No further update on drone cage. AW to follow up	GP AW AW

14	Clerk's Report Circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. 6th May 2025 Action points tracker spreadsheet updated and shared and sent with Minutes ahead of the meeting. Minutes to show council tax Band D - £2391.99. Evidenced and stated in Minutes. VAT reclaim submission to be sent. Burial Ground All burial records now received and the burial ground audited. Records amended and up to date. Updated guidance will be shared for comments in next 2 weeks following input from relevant professionals. May 2025. Proposal of fees to be uplifted by 5%. Senior Residents Easter Afternoon Tea Afternoon tea held on the 10th of April. Very successful and happy occasion. 15 residents came and 2 volunteers along with me, 2 councillors and Cllr Ashley Waite. All attendees very happy to meet again and would like more events in the future. One resident asked about a senior resident walking group for the village and some others asked if the Village Fun day will be held later this year. List of sponsors to be built upon for future events along with community champion contact details for raffle prizes etc. 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 Police and Crime bulletin shared with all for April. Waddesdon, Westcott and Winchendon Newsletter. I will contact and submit an update following the next meeting. Copy needs to be submitted by the 20th. Westcott Church Update shared with all Councillors from Rev Caroline Wainman as she is unable to attend this meeting: Report from Parish church of St. Mary the Virgin, Westcott- Tuesday 6th May 2025	AL AL AL AL AL
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As we conclude another year at St Mary the Virgin, Westcott, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on both the challenges we have faced and the resilience that has emerged within our small village community.

24. Church Services and Community Support

I am very pleased to report that, following a difficult period of uncertainty, a small and faithful group of villagers has stepped up to ensure that our monthly worship service on the first Sunday of each month can continue. This is a heartening sign that there remains a core of local commitment to keeping a Christian presence in our village. Although attendance remains modest, this regular act of worship provides continuity and a place of spiritual anchoring for those who do attend, and it offers a vital signpost of community life in our rural setting. I remain hopeful that others in the village might continue to respond to calls for support, not necessarily to attend regularly but to help keep the church open and sustainable for future generations.

2. Quinquennial Report and Building Repairs

This year's quinquennial inspection confirmed that significant restoration work is needed to address the condition of the ceiling and roof. While this is a daunting prospect, we have been advised by the Archdeacon that up to 60% of the costs may be met through heritage grants and relevant funding bodies.

However, to access this support, we urgently need a team of people—either from within the worshipping community or the wider village—to help coordinate applications, oversee logistics, and engage in local fundraising. Without a current churchwarden or dedicated Westcott representative on the Parochial Church Council (PCC), progress is slow, and the workload is unsustainable for the few currently involved. We hope that the coming months will see new individuals willing to step into leadership roles, and I would warmly welcome conversations with anyone interested in helping secure the future of this historic building.

3. Westcott School Building

The future of the former Westcott School building remains under review by the Diocese of Oxford. At present, the building is under the care of site guardians, while legal and logistical complications (including the Crown reverter clause) are addressed. I continue to be in contact with the Diocesan Board of Education and will share any updates I receive.

4. The Role of the Church in the Village

I continue to ask an open and heartfelt question: Does the village of Westcott want its church to remain open? This is not a rhetorical question, but a genuine invitation to the community. Whether as a place for worship, or for rites of passage such as weddings, funerals, and carol services, the church belongs to the village. Its survival now depends on wider involvement and ownership beyond the regular congregation. Some churches in similar situations have successfully launched "Friends of the Church" groups—open to anyone in the community who values the presence of the church, whether they worship regularly or not. This might be a model we explore in Westcott, and I would be grateful for any support or suggestions the Parish Council and residents might offer in reaching those who may be willing to help.

	In closing, I remain committed to ensuring that the church continues to be a living part of Westcott's identity, but it can no longer be sustained by the efforts of just one or two individuals. I extend my sincere thanks to those who have stepped up over the past year, and I look forward to working together—clergy, councillors, and community—to safeguard St Mary's future. With every blessing, Caroline The Revd Caroline Wainman Vicar of Waddesdon, Upper Winchendon, Westcott and Fleet Marston	
7.	Grass cutting contract. Grass cutting to the green and verges has commenced. Positive feedback regarding the verges received. Blades have requested a prompter payment structure as they bill us monthly from march to October but we meet 6 weekly. I request agreement to pay the fixed monthly rate of £982.50 + Vat per month – total of £1179.00 Parish Council agreed this monthly payment in line with prior agreed contract. Blades have been liaising with Decorare and have visited the site with the new trees and plants. They will assess if further time is required for strimming etc but will advise us of that in the next few months if an increase is required.	AL
8.	Elections Non contested seats for Westcott. 5 Councillors have been elected. Vacancies for 2.	
9.	AGAR and external Audit Internal Audit – AGAR to be commenced by Anthony Skeggs on receipt of information from myself in the next two weeks. Email sent to Bucks Council for repayment of fees for the audit. Further phone calls and emails sent – awaiting response.	AL AL
10.	Community Board meeting Community Board meeting attended by me, SP and JH in March. Now to be known as West Bucks Community Board. Annual report published.	
11.	Village Green Enhancements Works to the Village Green commenced 15.04.25. Delivery of the gate is delayed but we have been advised will be on site by 01.05.25.	

	12. New Model Standing Orders Draft standing orders attached for ratification at this meeting. 13. Defibrillator I am currently liaising with St Johns Ambulance regarding Defibrillator and CPR training options for the village. Awaiting potential dates and will require a donation to St Johns Ambulance. Additional defib pads and batteries quotes inclusive of VAT: <table data-bbox="400 622 1114 763"> <tr> <td></td><td>BHF</td><td>First Aid for Less</td></tr> <tr> <td>Paediatric Pads</td><td>£132</td><td>£133.56</td></tr> <tr> <td>Adult CPR pads</td><td>£168</td><td>£167.46</td></tr> <tr> <td>Batteries</td><td>£78</td><td>£107.16</td></tr> </table> We will require 2 x paediatric pads as none in the set-up kit, 1 adult pad and set of batteries. Parish Council Approved the purchase of 2 x paediatric pads, 1 x Adult pads and 1 x set of batteries to be stored at Westcott Cricket Club. Total from BHF of £510 Invoice and all documentation required sent to the Community Board for release of monies back to us of £1066.67 14. Land ownership / drainage / Riparian Ownership Teams meeting held with Zoe from Devolution / Bucks Highways. All landowner's details in and surrounding the village obtained. I will contact them all in the next few weeks to ask that they clear their ditches and drainage channels ahead of any Bucks Highways works. Template letters and Riparian Ownership guidance shared by Bucks Council to send to all. 15. Request for memorial bench Email received from the son of Audrey Blackwell who has passed away for permission to have a memorial bench on the park. Proposed budget of £1000 for the bench plus installation works. I have responded on behalf of the council with our deepest sympathies and that we are currently undertaking works on the green and will be in touch in the near future. 16. Cricket Club VE day celebrations The Cricket club emailed on the 23rd of April to see if WPC would like to support them. Email only seen on the 1st may as went into Junk Mail and I responded saying our meetings are held 6 weekly and we need considerably more notice to plan events. We would be happy to work with them in the future and wished them well for the day.		BHF	First Aid for Less	Paediatric Pads	£132	£133.56	Adult CPR pads	£168	£167.46	Batteries	£78	£107.16	AL AL AL AL
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	17. Town and Parish Clerks Forum held on 23rd April 25 I attended the online Town and parish Clerks Forum last month which was dominated with discussions on Planning with the head of the department Darran Eggleton. I have sent minutes to all councillors to read and have followed up with emails directly to Darran regarding planning breaches and enforcement questions that the council had. 18. Bucks Community resilience and Emergency Planning Survey 2025 I have completed this on behalf of the council and updated the clerk's details and address for WPC. I stated we would be happy to receive Bucks Councils help in creating an emergency plan. They state they are happy to attend a meeting in the future. I will share any responses on receipt. 19. Bucks Council Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS) questionnaire. Questionnaire completed and they will be in contact in the future regarding what they can offer to improve our current facilities. 20. Bank Authorisation 3 councillors are now fully able to authorise payments again following an administration issue being resolved 21. Environment Agency Email sent to Chris Manda regarding the process of a parish council reporting environmental health concerns as we are representing our residents and not an individual. I will share the response on receipt. 22. Land at Lower Green Email sent to John Grossart, following no reply from an email sent on the 9th April. I will forward the response on receipt. Response received 08.31 on 5th May: 'Thank you for your email and apologies for not replying sooner. I have asked the question about the process for devolution, i.e. transfer, and will follow up. I have since also picked this up with a colleague at Bucks Council who is in contact with Aylesbury Vale Estates' advisors and I will I you know what response I get.'	
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	23. Street Lighting Street light number 16 in Lower green was attended to in February but requires a new Lantern. They will be sending a quote over for us. Street light number 7 in High Street followed up and a repair team request has been chased. AL to see if LED quote is possible per streetlight and what the cost difference may be. 24. Westcott School buildings I have once again emailed Gordon Joyner to request the top of the hedge is cut and permission that we can use the water tap in the school playground. (This has already been previously requested). I also asked for an update to share at our Annual Parish meeting to our residents and will forward any response we may have.	AL						
15	Finance Cllrs noted the financial report sent prior to the meeting. Updated budget sheet shared Bank accounts as at 06.05.25 <table><tr><td>Current Account</td><td>£7437.06</td></tr><tr><td><u>Savings Account</u></td><td><u>£21560.84</u></td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>£28997.90</td></tr></table> Awaiting repayment of Bucks Council for external audit of £474 Awaiting payment of devolution monies £1261.22 Awaiting payment for grant of Defib costs of £1066.67 Will put in a VAT reclaim submission for 24 / 25 shortly Payments to be made: £204.96 for AL Salary £1179 for Blades grass cutting £42 for NALC – training to secure funding beyond the precept – September 25 All present agreed these payments. Direct Debits monthly: HMRC payment – variable but approx. £23.85 per month Unity Trust Service charge - £6 N Power – £140.23 Direct Debits Annually: ICO £35.00 Chairmans Allowance agreed as £200, payment for May of £100 and then payment in November of £100. Bank Signatories remain as SP, JH and TW	Current Account	£7437.06	<u>Savings Account</u>	<u>£21560.84</u>	Total	£28997.90	AL <
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Total	£28997.90							

16.	Planning Matters Planning Register shared prior to the meeting. 25/01244/APP received today. Plot 6305 Westcott venture park – change of use to open storage including demolition of buildings and construction of concrete yard and associated landscaping, infrastructure and access works (retrospective) SP to contact Nigel McKenzie at the Venture Park to enquire further before submission. Submission due by 3rd June 2025 Littleton Farm development remains in contention. Clerk was unable to access previously submitted comments due to change in access by Bucks Council. Planning consent training workshop details to be shared	SP AL
17	Bucks recycling Enforcement Action No further update from AW. Should have more information at the end of this week.	
18	Land at Lower Green John Grossart has responded to AL that he would follow up AV estates. The devolved agreement is going through AL to ask John Grossart to meet with WPC and discuss how to move forwards. AW updated all that he had met with AVE Commercial Assets manager – Graham Cole. Who stated that the Council want to get the best out of their assets in financial terms. He asked what the village wanted. AW stated allotments, green space and village hall. Graham Cole asked if the village would accept some housing in return for a village hall? AW said he would bring this to the Parish Councils Attention. GC will speak with the Board at the end of June. SL to enquire who charges rent to the horse owners in the field.	AL SL
19	Annual Parish Meeting 26.05.2025 – discussion for topics Topics discussed – Achievements in last 12 months Community engagement Village Plan Flood Management What does the village want? What do they want to happen in their Parish? To be invited – Westcott Cricket Club, Westcott Venture Park, TV Police, Rev Caroline, Bucks Councillor Leaflet to be formatted and distributed Facebook post to be completed	

20	Urgent matters of note Pete Brazier praised the cutting of verges and lots of praise for the work undertaken on the Village Green. War Grave group attended the churchyard on the 5th May to tidy the graves. They stated that boards should not be placed around the graves with gravel. They also raised concerns regarding weeds on the graves at Remembrance Day – SL had cleared the grave and removed all weeds for 2024. She spoke to the team and said the graves were cleaned with distilled water to not damage the stone. War grave team asked how long the gravel and boards have been there – all present thought approximately 20 years – SL to respond to them regarding weeding monthly schedule and when the gravel was renewed. SL asked if the school can be listed – AL to contact English heritage Footpath from top corner of village green along the venture park fence. AL to send maps to AW given to WPC by devolution. Watering of hedges and trees recently planted discussed. 50m hose purchased by GP and given to John Bitmore in the school buildings. He has been watering when possible, but a group of people need to assist as the weather is getting hotter. JH asked about Tree protection orders to be applied for. AL to follow up with Bucks Council Oak tree apparently to be given to all parishes by King Charles in recognition of the 80th Anniversary of VE day. SP thanked AL for all her hard work in sorting out the Parish Clerk role and continuing to do so.	SL AL AL ALL AL
173.	Date of next meetings: Annual Parish Meeting 27th May 2025 at 1930hrs at Westcott Cricket Club Parish Council Meeting 17th June 2025	
	Part 1 of the meeting closed at 2113 hrs	

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Date Agreed:

Signed:

Position: – Chair/Vice Chair/Councillor