

Westcott Parish Council

Amanda Ludlow – Clerk

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www.westcottparishcouncil.gov.uk

Annual Parish Meeting Minutes

27th May 2025 1930hrs at Westcott Cricket Club

Attendees

Parish Councillors

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

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	Welcome from the Chairman SP welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and explained the proceedings of the meeting to all present. 17 members of the public were in attendance and 2 members of the Thames Valley Police	
2	To Approve the minutes of Annua Parish meeting held on the 14th May 2024 AL read the minutes out to all present. It was resolved that the minutes were a true and accurate record	
3	To receive a report from Thames Valley Police. PC Fennemore and PC Newell attended the meeting. There have been recent spates of shed burglary and suspicious persons around the village. TVP encourage all residents to obtain CCTV or Ring doorbell footage and report this directly to TV Police. Please do not re3port this to other residents via Facebook without contacting TVP before.	

	Thames Valley Police Alerts are being relaunched. This is a free service to all residents and will send messages via text or email to all in specific localities they live regarding issues occurring or training and advice offered. Individuals can respond directly to these contacts if they have any concerns, issues or need support. Names and contact details given to the TVP officers attending at the meeting. The Clerk can contact the officers concerned with any new details of residents. Or they can contact directly on waddesdonNHPT@thamesvalley.police.uk Issues re parking in Burnham Road have been addressed and no further concerns raised. A recent speed monitoring exercise was conducted on the 22nd may at 1400hrs. 40 vehicles under 30mph, 2 vehicles between 31 and 34 mph, 2 vehicles between 35 and 37 mph. All reports are fed back to head office and hot spots identified to allocate static speed cameras. Concerns raised regarding motorbikes speeding through the village due to the proximity of On Yer Bike. The Officers promoted the commencement of a speed watch group – volunteers needed please. SID at Ashendon road end of village is reading in kilometres and is currently switched off. Cllr Pusey to update. No visitors to the village green this month and hopefully the new enhancements will assist in protecting the green space for all residents. Any issues with posts, hedging, trees to be directed to Cllr Hooper who led this project. TVP asked for an update on the school – guardians are now living in the building, and this is managed by the Oxford Diocese.	ALL GP
4	To receive the Chairmans Annual Report Cllr Sue Pusey gave the following report: I always say that writing my Chairmans report feels like Groundhog Day as so often we have been unable to progress any of the projects we are undertaking. Unfortunately, it is often a very tedious and long, drawn-out process negotiating red tape and ensuring we are spending your money wisely. I am pleased that this year we do have some positive news. Due to the dissatisfaction with the standards of grass cutting undertaken by Bucks Council last year we made the decision to take on the grass cutting ourselves. It is of course a more expensive option, but we are already seeing	

good results. We are using the same contractor we use for the village green and churchyard and have received positive feedback from the village.

A Defibrillator has been purchased and is sited on the wall outside the Cricket Club. Since the school closed the nearest defibrillator was on the Venture Park at the gatehouse. We are currently looking at getting some training organised for villagers and willing volunteers.

We undertook our usual Christmas meal for the Senior residents of the village and had a great meal at the Lion in Waddesdon. We also organised an afternoon tea in April which was also well attended. Thank you to those who made cakes for us and to the lovely volunteers who came along to serve and wash up.

April was a busy month as we also had our annual litter pick and general clean up. The bus shelter was washed and vegetation cleared, the verges cleared of litter and low hanging branches were removed from the trees on the verge opposite Burnham Road to improve vision round the bend and to enable our contractor to cut the grass more easily. Thanks to everyone who attended and special thanks to Charlie Connor and Megan for their tree cutting skills.

The village green enhancements have now been completed. There were a few hiccups along the way, not least when our contractor pulled out a week before the start date, we had agreed meaning we had to start the whole tender process again. A big thank you to Decorare who undertook the work of putting in the posts and planting the trees. Thank you to Jo Hooper for undertaking the design and project management. We are regularly watering the trees and bushes as the weather has been so dry. Volunteers are welcome to assist.

The War graves are now being regularly cleaned and weeded by Councillor Lacey. Thank you Sue for your hard work on this.

We have a brand-new website. The old one was unfortunately getting outdated and a bit clunky! Thanks to Jo Hooper for organising, it and thanks to Mandy for writing all the policies! We are required to publish certain information to ensure we are compliant and transparent in what we do. You will find all the minutes from past Council meetings and much more. Please have a look. It is there for you to see what we do.

The five councillors who stood for Westcott Parish Council seats at the recent elections were elected unopposed as all seats were not filled. With seven Parish Council seats we need a couple of people to step up and assist us. If you would like to be considered for the role, please email the Chairman or speak to any of the current Councillors to find out more about the role.

We need Community Champions. If you don't feel you can become a Councillor how about volunteering with us. If everyone just did one small thing in the village we could achieve so much more.

We have been elected for another four years, and we need to know what you want to happen in your village. If you have looked at the agenda you will see that we will be having reports from local interested parties and after that you

	have the chance to tell us what you think and hopefully put your name down to help us out with some projects. I have popped some headings up on the flip chart with ideas for projects that have been suggested or that we are already undertaking. Now I need to do some thankyous. Thanks to the Cricket Club for providing our venue. Thank you to my fellow Councillors (few though we are). It is a rewarding job when we achieve positive things for the village. Finally, a big thank you to our new clerk Mandy who had a baptism of fire and was thrown in the deep end when our previous clerk moved on. Thankfully she swam instead of sinking under the weight of the paperwork. I guess we can shortly stop calling her our new clerk as she will have managed to negotiate her way through a whole years' worth of obstacles. A member of the public asked that the site of the defibrillator is placed in the Waddesdon newsletter. SP responded to say that it will be in the next edition of the Waddesdon newsletter. A member of the public asked about the Waddesdon Greenway extension to Westcott. SP responded that this extension was not happening due to the Rothschild Estate being unable to agree a route with Bucks Council .																													
5	To receive the Financial Statement of the Council for 2024 - 2025 <table><tr><td>Cash at 01.04.24</td><td>£42648.74</td></tr><tr><td>Income of</td><td>£12785.33</td></tr><tr><td>Expenditure of</td><td>£26588.88</td></tr><tr><td>Cash at 31.03.25</td><td>£29385.19</td></tr></table> Key expenditure: <table><tr><td>Village green landscaping deposit</td><td>£3630</td></tr><tr><td>Grass cutting</td><td>£4578.33 ex VAT</td></tr><tr><td>Defibrillator</td><td>£1154.72</td></tr><tr><td>Website / email domain changeover</td><td>£456.04 ex VAT</td></tr><tr><td>RGL survey of village green</td><td>£3060</td></tr><tr><td>Tree surgery</td><td>£3000</td></tr><tr><td>Insurance</td><td>£873.11</td></tr><tr><td>Street scene – bins / dog waste</td><td>£342</td></tr><tr><td>Street Lighting energy / repairs</td><td>£2253.76 ex VAT</td></tr><tr><td>Salaries / expenses</td><td>£2374.18</td></tr></table> VAT reclaim submitted for £2730.26 Full financial report available to view if required. Member of the public asked if some areas of the grass could be left longer?	Cash at 01.04.24	£42648.74	Income of	£12785.33	Expenditure of	£26588.88	Cash at 31.03.25	£29385.19	Village green landscaping deposit	£3630	Grass cutting	£4578.33 ex VAT	Defibrillator	£1154.72	Website / email domain changeover	£456.04 ex VAT	RGL survey of village green	£3060	Tree surgery	£3000	Insurance	£873.11	Street scene – bins / dog waste	£342	Street Lighting energy / repairs	£2253.76 ex VAT	Salaries / expenses	£2374.18	
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	Cllr Hooper stated happy to look at options in the future with volunteers for the environment.	
6	To Receive the Unitary Report from our Buckinghamshire Councillor – Cllr Ashley Waite Buckinghamshire Community Update: A Year in Review <u>Boundary changes and Local Elections</u> With the recent elections taking place earlier this month, the total number of councillors has dropped from 147 to 97. This is reflected across the county with three, two and one-member wards. This village is now part of a ward which includes Waddesdon, Westcott, Ashendon, Brill, Ludgershall, Oakley, Chilton and all the hamlets in between, stretching along the south side of the A41 from Fleet Marston to the Oxfordshire border. <u>Roads and Infrastructure</u> In a major effort to improve the county's road network, £79 million has been budgeted, £20 million comes from central government, and £59 million is from local funds to cover 2,100 miles of roads. In the last year, 34,000 potholes were replaced, 86,000 gullies cleaned, and 190 carriageway improvements took place. We are also implementing the Lane Rental Scheme, which helps keep traffic flowing on the major routes by increasing the fees and fines that are due for roadworks across the busiest 10% of the network in bucks. Residents are invited to contact Ashley personally if any road issue is raised. HS2 works coming to an end in terms of road closures. Fleet Marston roundabout to be removed in 2026 Q1. Diversion signs discussed by members of the public stating they are confusing and incorrect. AW explained that there is an accessible webpage called One Network to look at all road closures which links directly to google maps for up to date guidance. Causeway one.network <u>Development Boom</u> Housing numbers for the coming years will increase by 42% increase in homes to be built. This increase is based on changes since the last general election. These numbers were introduced in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which continues to guide housing numbers. We are offered some protection from VALP, which is still in force until September 2026. There is a call for sites currently taking place with the Buckinghamshire Plan, which will eventually replace the VALP. The need for five-year housing numbers has removed some of the protection which was in place. Solar is still a big threat to green spaces. A recent plot on the other side of Bishopstone was turned down during a recent planning meeting, citing poor transport links and loss of green space as a factor. Littleton Green development is proposed for 535 houses but is not in the local plan or neighbourhood plan. There will be no doctors, no secondary school and will cause significant road issues. A member of the public asked about the Waddesdon bypass which was rejected previously due to concern of the land infilled by 2k houses. Concerns raised regarding two other large parcels of land that may be put forward with a domino effect. All planning requests are accessible on the Bucks Council Website planning portal to view and make comments.	

A member of the public asked about land in Westcott for housing and development.

AW spoke about land at lower green that WPC have been trying to adopt for a number of years. AW met with Aylesbury Vale Estates who proposed that if they were to build houses, they could support the parish with a village hall, community centre or community garden. WPC will report on this further as this is looked into further and receive direct correspondence. The other parcel of land at lower green that was going to be devolved to the PC may not proceed in light of AW's discussions. SP is awaiting feedback.

A member of the public asked about housing behind the bus stop. SP responded that there is nothing we are aware of at this time.

A member of the public asked about the 'donkey field' as there is a lot of work happening there currently. SP responded that this has been deemed agricultural land only and the council have placed restrictions on the removal of hard core and storage containers on it unless required for agricultural purposes.

A member of the public asked if the parish Council do not want development in the village? His daughter cannot afford a property here unless further development goes ahead. TW explained that the role of a parish Council is to look out for current and future parishioners. The infrastructure must be able to support and future development and that development needs to be affordable to people in this area.

A member of the public asked about the Social club site. SP stated that no plans from the venture park have been shared at this time.

A member of the public asked about the current development in Linnet Drive / Raven Crescent – 6 houses are currently being built but are at the front of the land. There may be a further 6 in the future as a phase 2 not yet confirmed.

Helping Hands: Support Across the County

Our "Helping Hands" initiative remains active, supporting residents across the county. From helping people access food through various schemes to offering energy-saving advice via the "Energy Doctor," we continue to assist those in need. We're also addressing rising energy and water costs, providing much-needed relief to vulnerable families.

Budget Breakdown

The council tax was set at 4.9%, which is lower than several neighbouring councils. Of the £1.2 billion budget, 77% (£924 million) has been allocated, leaving a balance of £276 million. The funding continues to be focused on the "Magic Four":

- Children's Social Care
- Adult Social Care
- Home to School Transport
- Temporary Accommodation

	<u>I'd Like to Borrow:</u> Community Support Services Launched last year in Quainton; I'd Like to Borrow is Buckinghamshire's first "Library of Things" – a community-based tool and equipment lending service. It's designed to make home maintenance and improvement accessible to all, encouraging collaborative consumption, reducing waste, and lowering carbon emissions. It's all about strengthening community resources and helping people tackle projects without the need for expensive tool hire or purchases. <u>I'd Like A Bike</u> A subsidiary of I'd Like to Borrow, I'd Like A Bike refurbishes donated bikes, providing them to low-income families and individuals transitioning out of the care system. This initiative ensures that transportation is accessible to those who need it most. <u>I'd Like A Bus</u> Formerly Bernwode Bus, this service provides essential transport for rural communities. We cater to various groups, including the elderly, volunteers, schools, sports clubs, and youth clubs, ensuring everyone has access to the transport they need. <u>North Bucks Food Drive</u> Part of I'd Like to Borrow, the North Bucks Food Drive collects food on the first Saturday of every month, with deliveries made to Aylesbury Vineyard. These collections help address food insecurity, supporting those in need throughout the community.	
7	To Receive a report from St Mary the Virgin Church 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. <u>1. Church Services and Community Support</u> 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. <u>2. Quinquennial Report and Building Repairs</u> 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. <u>3. Westcott School Building</u> 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. <u>4. The Role of the Church in the Village</u> 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 As rev Caroline was not at the meeting SP wanted to understand what does 40% of the costs look like in a financial figure? AL to follow up to ascertain a figure TW stated the Church is grade 2 listed as designed by Street. This may therefore inflate the costs further. A member of the public asked if the church could be used outside of worship – lego clubs, sleep overs, community meetings? AL to feedback to rev Caroline	AL AL
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8	To receive a report from Westcott Cricket Club Pete Busby and Mark Strong attended representing Westcott Cricket Club. They are a small group of volunteers working hard at keeping things going. They have 2 league teams on a Saturday and the bar is open. They have mid week games on alternate weeks with an open bar and have an occasional Sunday game. The 1st team are top of the league currently and the 2nd team are second in their league. Women's cricket team has started and they currently have an average attendance of 15 per group. Aged from 13 to older age. They meet on a Sunday at 1030hrs if anyone is interested in joining them. The first friendly women's match for the team will be in June. Youth Cricket has been advertised for half term with limited responses. Holiday clubs will be planned for the summer. Facilities require improving – cricket nets currently as not per regulations. Funds have been raised and section 106 funds allocated by the Parish Council, however planning permission now needs to be obtained. The cricket club building needs a new roof and cladding and the ladies toilet needs to be updated. The Club is keen to reach out to the village of Westcott and s shortly holding a darts tournament, village BBQ on the 6th June and rock and roll bingo on the 27th June. All currently advertised on Facebook. JH suggested contacting the Waddesdon newsletter and to place adverts on the village notice boards as not everyone uses Facebook. The cricket club house is available to hire with or without a bar.	
9	To receive a report from Westcott Venture Park Nigel Mackenzie was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following in an email: Our main focus is on the development in the centre of the park – Plot 9000 which encompasses the meeting and catering facility known as the Skylark. That will be opening late September this year. Everyone will have seen the solar panels at the front of the Park; this is a major investment by Patrizia in renewable energy and will be coming on line at the end of 2026 . I think the best thing will be to see what issues / questions are being raised and then we have a meeting shortly thereafter and see what we can do in response.	

	A member of the public asked about the many trucks coming through the village. SP stated that signage has been ordered and we are waiting for it to deter HGV access. Unfortunately the Bucks Council Freight Strategy is not taking changes forward of current weight limits. All issues raised at the last APM have not been addressed. SP will contact Nigel Mackenzie for a response. Light pollution from the Venture Park discussed. Lighting to be challenged in each planning application. WPC and AW continue to challenge each application as they arise. Concerns have been raised regarding the temporary buildings that have popped up. Concerns raised regarding drones and the drone cage as well as private drone. Any sightings of drones to be reported to the clerk of the Parish Council and SP will take this further. A member of the public asked about the Westcott Village Facebook page – SP explained this is not part of the Westcott Parish Council. A request for planting around the solar panels was asked to lessen the harshness of the view.	SP ALL SP
10	To receive Charity Reports Beck and Fetto – meets regularly and gives to the poor and needy of the parish for situations that they haven't brought upon themselves. The team are looking at rewording the criteria. Faith Beaumont – 10yrs ago the charity went into a hiatus as the clerk had left and no replacement found. Slowly the charity is returning, and TW will advise of any updates. Focus is on people who are in training rare apprentices. William Turner – AL to contact Elizabeth Atkinson – previous councillor for an update and contact details.	TW AL
11	To receive questions from members of the public No immediate questions raised that have not been raised during the course of the meeting. SP turned to her list of headings as to what could be achieved in the village and what the village wants. Village pump painting needed – Gerald Land volunteered – WPC to pay for any paint Notice boards – rub down and varnish needed PC vacancies – two vacant councillor positions currently if anyone is interested	

	Open gardens – one member of the public asked if this can occur next year? Coffee morning monthly – all ages to be looked into Santa collection – to go toward the senior residents xmas meal Village green – help with watering and care of AW explained that he now has 3 mini buses at his disposal for the community to use for trips out – shopping, days out etc. Gerrard Land has offered to learn to drive a bus. Playground working party to be formed to look at improvements – Penny Land and Emily Rickus volunteered to assist with this. Any further ideas and volunteers to contact the Clerk directly who will facilitate ways forward.	
12	Closure SP thanked all who attended and the positive way forwards that all attending have contributed towards.	
	Part 1 of the meeting closed at 2138 hrs	

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Date Agreed:

Signed:

Position: – Chair/Vice Chair/Councillor