

MINUTES of the PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on Tuesday 22nd JULY 2025 at 7.30pm in THE FOX ASPENDEN.

Present Cllr Richard Blackburn (Chair) Cllr Stuart Chambers Cllr Joe Murphy
District Councillor Sue Nicholls
Reverend Kirsty Wainwright (Rector St Mary's Church Aspenden)
Reverend Sarah Bagnall (Curate St Mary's Church Aspenden)
0 members of the public
Officer attending Denise Anderson (Clerk)

APOLOGIES

25.48 Apologies were received from Cllr Tracy Devonshire due to work commitments.

It was resolved to approve Cllr Devonshire's absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Tom Poulton as he was on holiday.

It was resolved to approve Cllr Poulton's absence.

Councillor Chambers gave his apologies as he needed to leave the meeting at 8.00pm.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

25.49 None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

25.50 The Chair brought Agenda item **General Village Matters II**. St Mary's Church forward.

Rev. Reverend Kirsty Wainwright introduced Rev. Sarah Bagnall, the new Curate, who will be under the guidance of Rev. Wainwright for the next 3 years.

Together they wished to bring two things to the Council.

1. St Mary's Church is being opened at the weekends and would like to ask for the assistance of people in the village with the unlocking and locking of the church. Long term they would like to have the church open all the time but currently have limitations with manpower. Cllr Blackburn suggested they contact the police to ask them to include it on their patrol rota.
2. The volunteer who previously cut the grass in the church yard has moved away they are looking for volunteers to help with this task.

Cllr Blackburn suggested they leaflet the village and the Clerk volunteered to produce an A5 leaflet and some A4 posters.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

25.51 The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 27th May 2025 having been circulated previously, were before the meeting and signed as a correct record.

CHAIR'S REPORT

25.52 **Aspenden Parish Council Chair's Report**

Play Area & Village Green Flooding

Following a further review of potential options to solve the flooding, an alternative solution was suggested by Gordon Devonshire. After further investigation, Cllr's Murphy & Blackburn and Gordon Devonshire met with a specialist contractor, Terrain Aeration along with the engineer supporting the Parish Council on this project—essentially the method involves hammering a hollow probe into the soil to one-metre depth into which compressed air is then blasted through the probe and at the same time injecting dried milled seaweed. Over a period of time the seaweed expands and contracts with the moisture content in the soil, helping to keep the fractures and fissures open. The process is repeated over a grid pattern, two meters apart - the holes are then backfilled with an aggregate to provide a ventilation/aeration shaft to promote the aeration process.

Terrain Aeration Services Ltd. have worked successfully with many clients including: The Royal Parks (Buckingham Palace & Windsor), National Trust, Diddly Squat Farm and all major house builders.

The contractor was subsequently instructed to carry out the works which were undertaken on the 8th July 2025. The costs were funded by East Herts S106 monies.

Dandara Phase 2

Dandara are to undertake their highway works shortly and were initially proposing to fully close Aspenden Road for period in excess of 4 weeks with a diversion in place through Westmill. After a series of objections lodged by businesses on the Watermill Industrial Estate, Aspenden & Westmill Parish Councils and local residents, they will now (subject to sign off by Herts County Council's Highways team) undertake the works whilst keeping the road open to traffic but controlled by traffic lights – Marshalls will also be present. The road however will need to be closed at some point for about a week and this will only be done overnight, closing the road at 6.30pm and re-opening at 5am. Cllr Terry Smith convened a meeting on the 10th July with the developer, local businesses, representatives from Westmill & Aspenden Parish Councils and Ringway (representing HCC) to discuss more fully - it is likely the works will commence early August for a period of 10 weeks.

Concern was also expressed about the poor current state of the road between the two villages and a meeting is currently being set up with Ringway to specifically discuss this.

Highways

We would recommend residents continue to report pot holes, broken surfaces etc. through the East Herts website: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/highways-parking/report-street-light-or-pothole>

COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

25.53 There was no report from the County Councillor.

District Councillor's Report

Postal vote reapplication

A reminder that, following changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022, postal voters are now required to reapply for their postal vote every three years. All postal voters who made their current application before 31 October 2023 are required to reapply for their postal vote by 31 January 2026. Electoral Services will be contacting all those affected by this change in the coming weeks explaining how to reapply. Electors will be contacted by email if we hold an email address or by post if we do not.

More information and a list of FAQs can be found on the council's [website](#).

New Waste Collection starts on 4 August

A reminder that the new waste service starts from the 4th August. Residents might already have received their new bins. If there are any issues e.g. missing bins or too many bins, missing sticker pack, or damaged items please report directly to East Herts Customer services at customer.services@eastherts.gov.uk

There is an [FAQ](#) on the East Herts website that will answer most questions East Herts Council will be writing to every household ahead of the changeover to advise them of the revised collection days.

For households that require extra waste capacity for example a large family with young children or because of medical need requiring disposal of sanitary items and you are not already registered with East Herts Council as requiring additional services. Please visit www.eastherts.gov.uk/extracapacity to fill in an application form to request more capacity.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation

The public consultation is now open for the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) draft which was launched last week.

This strategy is the culmination of over 18 months of work by the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership (HNRP), with support from environmental and ecological experts, land managers and, as has been of notable value in East Herts, the contribution of Town and Parish Councils, stakeholder organisations and community. Thank you to everyone involved so far for your contribution to supporting nature!

Here is the link to the LNRS web page read the draft strategy draft and take part in the feedback:

[Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy public consultation | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

The consultation will close on Monday 8th September at 11:45 pm.

During the consultation period, the LNRS team will also be holding four webinars to talk through some of the highlights of the strategy, demo the map tool and provide an opportunity to ask questions. The same content will be presented in each of the four sessions.

Book your session on the LNRS consultation webpage

- 21 July 2025, 12:00-13:30 PM
- 21 July 2025, 18:00-19:30 PM
- 19 August 2025, 12:00-13:30 PM
- 19 August 2025, 18:00-19:30 PM

The webinars are open to all, so please share this invitation with anybody you think may be interested and of course do feel free to respond and join the sessions too.

Sustainability Fund grants available

The new waste management partner, Veolia, have £15,000 of sustainability and community funding available each year for the duration of their contract with the East and North Herts Waste Partnership.

Up to £1,000 in funding is available per project and applicants can also request in-kind resources or volunteers to help them deliver their project.

One standout project will receive a bumper grant of up to £5,000. This additional award will recognise a project that demonstrates remarkable, long-term community impact. Simply opt in during the standard application process to be considered.

Environmental projects will need to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Enhances biodiversity
- Promotes sustainable waste behaviours
- Protects the environment by using recycled, reused or reclaimed materials

Projects that strengthen the local community, including but not limited to employment support programmes, rehabilitation projects, and youth development initiatives, are also welcomed.

Applications should be made via Veolia's website at veolia.co.uk/Sustainability-Fund. The fund will be open for applications until Tuesday 30 September.

Other News

There are two other news items that I have been involved in setting up as part of the new Buntingford Community Project that might be of interest:

Men's Shed Group

A new Men's Shed Group has started in Buntingford which meets every Tuesday from 2pm to 4pm at the Manor House. The aims of a Men's Shed are to encourage people (not just men) to come together to make, repair and repurpose, supporting projects in the local community. The group has only been going for a few weeks and already has 12 members. The plan is to get together weekly to discuss plans, come up with project ideas whilst trying to find a suitable shed space in or near Buntingford. For more details contact Phil Ricketts email: philricketts@btinternet.com or phone: 07896 860769

Buntingford Repair Café

Over the past couple of months, we have been putting a call out for volunteers interested in joining us at our new repair café starting in Buntingford. We now have enough volunteers with a range of repair skills to enable us to hold our first Repair Café at Seth Ward Community Centre in Buntingford on 27 September from 2pm to 5pm. Items we can accept for repair include electrical and battery items, general items including small furniture and toys, upholstery and clothing repairs, bike repairs and maintenance, computer and laptop IT assistance and simple repairs and tool and knife sharpening.

There will also be a café serving tea, coffee and homemade cake with proceeds going towards hall hire and other running costs.

Items needing repair need to be booked in in advance. Will have a dedicated Ticket Tailor webpage set up for each repair café, until that is up and running repair bookings can be done by emailing Madela Baddock at repaircafebuntingford@gmail.com

FINANCE

25.54 Finance report and payments authorised

To receive the finance report. The report is an appendix to the minutes.

25.55 Annual Governance and Accountability return (AGAR) 2024-2025

The Clerk reported that all the required actions had been taken with regard to the AGAR and the council were fully compliant.

25.56 Reimbursements of Insurance Premium and Planning Application fee owed from PMC

Cllr Blackburn explained that Parish Council have paid the insurance premium of £1030.59 that covers the Pavilion and storage building as well as the fee of £216.50 for Planning Application 3/24/2336/FUL Extension to veranda including canopy roof. These costs will be refunded by the Pavilion Management Committee.

25.57 S106 Funds

Cllr Blackburn reported that the Parish Council has around £35,000 S106 funding. Monies from that fund have been used for tree works, surveys and a topographical study and flood alleviation works.

25.58 UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Cllr Blackburn explained that the Parish Council were hoping to access this fund for the resolution of the flooding issues but unfortunately any monies had to be spent before 31st March 2025. There is a new pot of money but there are different criteria which might preclude the council making a future bid.

PLANNING**25.59 Planning Report**

To receive the updated Planning Report. The report is an appendix to these minutes.

3/24/1255/OUT	Land South Of A507, West Of A10 Buntingford	No further comments to make and reiterate their objections set out in their original response submitted on 21st August 2024
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25.60 Planning Applications since the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 27th May 2025

None

25.61 Planning Applications

3/25/0498/OUT	Little Meadow Baldock Road Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9RH	Subject to no concerns by Highways and the Local Planning Authority over access and scale, Aspenden Parish Council have no comment to make on this application.
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HIGHWAYS**25.62 Aspenden Road Works and Diversion**

Cllr Blackburn stated that under their planning permission for Dandra Phase 2 they were obligated to carry out highway works. The Aspenden Road is very narrow at the White House and traffic management system will be installed so that it is only one way at this point with traffic on the bend facilitated by a holding point and traffic lights. There has been agreement that there will be no closure during the day and the works will be managed with traffic lights. The final phase will take place overnight with a total closure between 6.30pm and 5.00am. Proposals for the works to start at the beginning of August.

25.63 Unnamed Road between Aspenden and Westmill

Cllr Blackburn, Ringways and a representative from Westmill Parish Council to meet to discuss possible works.

PARISH MATTERS**25.64 Police Report MAY 2025**

The monthly comprehensive Police Report by the Neighbourhood Policing Team had been received and circulated to Councillors.

Councillor Chambers left the meeting at this point.

25.65 Pavilion Management Committee (PMC)

Cllr Blackburn reported that at the last meeting of the PMC the reimbursements to the Parish Council had been approved and the budget for the year agreed.

25.66 Children's Playground**I. Drainage Works**

Cllr Murphy reiterated the works outlined in the Chair's report and stated that we now had to wait for some rain before the effectiveness of the works by Terrain Aeration Services Ltd. could be tested. Cllr Murphy added that as this system had taken place along the tree line it should help the tree to flourish.

II. H&S inspection report and recommendations

The Clerk reported that the council had received a H&S check from Broadmead Leisure that identified a number of issues, all of low risk. It was felt that the council should await the Annual Inspection Report, due very shortly, thus enabling all the identified works to take place at the same time.

25.67 Tree Survey

The Clerk reported that she had sought some guidance on the regularity of a tree survey and would report back to council when this had been received.

25.68 General Village Matters**I. Aspenden Defibrillator Annual Support/Pay as you go**

The Clerk has tried to ascertain the benefits of renewal or a pay as you go basis but has been unsuccessful in getting an answer. The Clerk will pursue this.

II. St Mary's Church – moved to the top of the Agenda**III. Planters**

Mrs Chris Newman has agreed to continue to attend the planters

CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDANCE**25.69 Clerks Report and Correspondence**

The Clerk said she had received a request from Citizens Advice for a donation towards their works. The Council stated they were not in a position to make such a donation.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date	Meeting	Venue
Tuesday 16 th September 2025	Parish Council Meeting	The Fox
Tuesday 19 th November 2025	Parish Council Meeting	The Fox
Tuesday 17 th February 2026	Parish Council Meeting	The Fox

Agendas will be put on the Parish Council website www.aspendenpc.org.uk and the village noticeboard.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed _____

Date _____