

UNAPPROVED DRAFT1



Minutes of the High Wych Ordinary Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 13th November 2024 8pm in Allen's Green Village Hall

Cllr Tom Payne (TP) Chairman* Cllr Carrie Payne (CP)*
Cllr John Andreotti (JA)* Cllr Liz Faulkner*
Cllr Jacqueline Jackson* * *Denotes present*
Cllr Keith Jordan (KJ)*

Present: Cllr Eric Buckmaster, Cllr Ian Devonshire,

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council was absent due to illness. Notes were taken by a councillor.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8pm.

ACTION

24.079 Apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None (all present)
2. Others: Clerk Colin Marks: illness

24.080 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. **Interests declared:** None
2. **Dispensation requests:** None received

24.081 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 10th September 2024

Clerk

The meeting was not suspended for public comments

24.082 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman reported that he had received the resignation of Cllr Dave Smith. A vote of thanks was passed for the many years he had served the Parish Council.

24.083 East Herts Rural Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)

No police report received.

24.084 Reports by County and District Councillors

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster's written November report is included in the Minutes as Appendix B.

District Cllr Ian Devonshire: No report received.

24.085 Planning

1. New Applications:

3/24/1942/LBC	Crumps Farm: Reinstatement of window to east elevation RESOLVED: No comments
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Clerk

2. Decision Notices. As detailed in Appendix A below – for information only

3. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda: NONE

24.086 Finance

1. Report of the Council's Accounts 31st October 2024

Opening cashbook balance 1st September 2024	8,014.45
Plus income to 31 st October	21,278.85
Minus expenditure to 31 st October	<u>2,416.80</u>
Balance available to Council at 31st October (cashbook balance)	26,876.50
Plus unrepresented payments	<u>0.00</u>
Reconciled Bank statement/cashbook balance 31st October	<u>26,876.50</u>

RESOLVED: That the Accounts Statement to 31st October be approved.

Clerk

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2. Accounts Reconciliation at 31st October 2024

Cashbook balance 31st October £26,876.50
 Bank balance 31st October £26,876.50

RESOLVED: To agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

3. Performance against 2023/24 budget at 31st October 2024

	Budget	Actual to 31 st Oct
Income total	95,925	81,027
Section 106	49,950	49,950
PWLB Loan	<u>25,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Income balance without S106 or PWLB	<u>20,975</u>	<u>31,077</u>

£550 HTC insurance refund has yet to be received.

	Budget	Actual to 31 st Oct
Expenditure Net of VAT	98,862	63,560
Play Area redevelopment	75,000	49,500
PWLB Loan servicing	<u>3,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Expenditure balance without S106 or PWLB	<u>20,862</u>	<u>14,060</u>

Budget surplus/deficit -2,937
 Forecast surplus/deficit -3,210

Opening bank balance 1 April 2024 17,963
 Forecast closing bank balance 31st March 2025 14,753

RESOLVED: To agree the performance against budget as presented.

4. Payments for approval: All expenditure to be made under The General Power of Competence

		Value	VAT incl
Color-Board	Emptying litter & poo bins October	120.00	20.00
HMRC	PAYE October (pay November)	120.00	
Clerk	Expenses October/November	11.00	
Everflow Water	Allotments Nil charge £2.89 in credit	0.00	
B.B.&C. Fencing	Reposition play area gates & fencing	2,070.00	345.00
Clerk	Salary November	622.88	
Color-Board	Emptying litter & poo bins November	120.00	20.00
HMRC	PAYE November (pay 9 th December)	155.80	
<i>** Grass cutting KGV Field High Wych and Allen's Green village green</i>			
VAT included To be reclaimed under VAT Act 1994 (1), (3)			385.00

RESOLVED: to approve all payments as per the Clerk's report

Clerk

5. Draft budget and precept, 2025/26

The Clerk's draft budget and precept for 2025/26, with projections for 2026/27 and 2027/28 was considered and agreed in principle. Subject to the purchase of new gates for the KGV Field, the forecast deficit for 2024/25 is £-3,210 and the possible deficit for 2025/26 is £-1,374. It is anticipated that the deficit could be further reduced over the following two years. To be finalised at the January meeting.

Clerk

It was noted that the Government's latest budget would impact the employer's National Insurance Contributions, although NALC has yet to quantify the extent of the impact.

Clerk

24.087 1. Highways

1. Overgrown hedges update:
 1. MOG/Bakers Lane. Badly trimmed hedge: With Cllr Eric Buckmaster/MOG.
 2. Other overgrown hedges impeding footways: With Cllr Eric Buckmaster.
2. Potholes in High Wych Lane: With Cllr Eric Buckmaster.

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3. Other issues: None raised
- 2. Footpaths and other Public Rights of Way (PRoW)**
1. Modification Order for footpath near Broadfields: Ongoing TP
2. Footpath Broadfields to High Wych Lane: With the Chairman/Cllr Eric Buckmaster for contact at Clarion Housing. TP
3. Other issues: None raised. TP
- 3. Other Parish Matters**
- 1. High Wych Memorial Hall and car park**
1. Issues raised: None.
- It was agreed to accept Mr Robert Edwards' quote of £280 for felling the dangerous tree. JJ
- 2. Bus shelter litter bin**
- No action taken. TP
- 3. Notice Board: retention and refurbishment**
- No update. JJ
- 4. Consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at parish council meetings.**
- Not pursued.
- 5. Request to plant a memorial tree on Allen's Green Village Green.**
- RESOLVED: To approve the request, but to note that the tree should be sited in such a way as to not impede the mowing of the Green.** JJ
- It was also **RESOLVED to accept Robert Edwards' quote of £150 to fell the Silver Birch opposite the Queen Head, Allens Green.** JJ
- 24.088 1. Playing Fields and buildings**
- 1. Harlow Theatre Company: pavilion update**
1. Consideration of allowing a 20ft shipping container to replace the old tin shed.
- It was agreed that Cllr John Andreotti would speak with HTC about the container and potential alternatives. The Council was generally concerned over the visual impact of a container on the green and noted that planning approval would probably be required. JA
2. Update on 2023 unpaid insurance and lease payments: Cllr John Andreotti to take up with HTC. JA
- 2. Play area**
1. Quote for two new gates into the field.
- RESOLVED: To accept the B.B.&C. Fencing quote of £1,233 (excl VAT) to take down and remove existing dilapidated gates, and to provide and fix to existing posts a pair of 4m. wide double leaf field gates, including galvanised hinges and locking arm.** Clerk/KJ
- 2. Allotments report**
1. It was noted that the allotment water meter was unreadable due to fogging. The Clerk to be asked to contact Affinity Water to discuss a replacement (which the Council expects to be at their expense). Clerk
- 24.089 Correspondence:** The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:
- Cllr Ian Devonshire: Re Gilston Community Forum, 27th November
 - EHDC: Notice and detail of polling places review. Representations deadline 28th November
 - NHDC: Litter bin contract changes
 - HAPTC: Consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at Parish meetings (24.087.3.4)
 - HAPTC/SLCC: Employer's NIC contribution changes announced in the government's November budget

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- Parishioner: Request to plant a memorial tree on Allen’s Green village green (24.087.3.5)

24.090 Late items and items for future agendas

1. Late items received: NONE
2. Items for future agendas and other matter raised:
Addition of a further piece of play area equipment not pursued at present.

24.091 Date and venue of next meeting

8pm, Monday 13th January 2025 at High Wych Memorial Hall.

Clerk

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10pm.

Signed.....

APPENDIX A

24.085.2 24.072.2 PLANNING DECISION NOTICES for information only as at 8th November

3/24/1491/FUL	Bonneys Row: Redevelopment of site.	Awaited
3/24/1632/PNHH	1 Grange Cottages: Single storey rear extension.	Awaited
3/24/1633/PNHH	2 Grange Cottages: Single storey rear extension.	Awaited
3/24/0291/FUL	Field off Blounts Lane: Create access for farm machinery.	Awaited

APPENDIX B

E Buckmaster County Councillor Report November 2024

More than 100 children have been helped by Hertfordshire County Council’s emergency foster care scheme since it launched in 2022.

But more foster carers are needed in Hertfordshire to provide this vital emergency care and support to children and young people in their moment of need.

When a child or children need to leave their family home or care provider at short notice, they need someone to look after them until the best and most appropriate longer term care can be found.

Emergency foster carers provide children with somewhere safe and nurturing to stay for about 10 days. This allows time for the crisis to calm and for the child, family and professionals across social care, health and education to consider how best to meet the child’s needs.

This innovative scheme has led to more than a fifth of the children placed in emergency care being able to return safely to their family home.

Free bus travel in Hertfordshire thanks to Bus Service Improvement

Ten thousand (10,000) free bus tickets are now available to use across Hertfordshire, thanks to Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding. The offer allows residents and visitors to use the new Intalink Connect ticket, exploring Hertfordshire with its All Zone Daily Ticket which provides unlimited all day travel.

Intalink Connect offers flexible ticketing using multi-operator bus travel. The county is divided into 14 zones, and passengers can buy tickets for single-zone travel, two adjacent zones, or across all zones in the region, including some points beyond Hertfordshire’s borders.

A free ticket can be claimed through the Intalink App, using the discount code **CATCHBUS24**. A maximum of one ticket per Intalink App account is available.

The £29.7million BSIP fund has led to significant improvements across Hertfordshire’s local bus network including new services, more frequent buses as well as the launch of schemes such as our uber-style on demand bus service HertsLynx, which currently operates in north and east Hertfordshire and Dacorum.

Hertfordshire County Council is kicking off its popular slipper swap events, giving residents the chance to throw away old, tired slippers and pick up a brand new non-slip pair.

The slipper swap events taking place this autumn and winter are the result of a collaboration between Hertfordshire County Council’s adult care service and library service.

The free, drop-in events in libraries offer older residents and people with disabilities free anti-slip slippers in addition to professional advice and support to keep them safe and well over the colder months.

Occupational therapists will be available to speak to at most events, along with community partners.

Attendees will also be able to collect a free Warm in Winter gift bag, provided by Small Acts of Kindness, and get information on the Carers Library Card and the Home Library Service.

Bishop’s Stortford Recycling Centre to Get a Revamp Hertfordshire County Council will shortly be carrying out improvements to Bishop’s Stortford Recycling Centre, which will result in a significant increase to its capacity.

Once the work is complete, there will be more than twice the current amount of parking spaces and an

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increase in the number of recycling containers to both improve the facility's capacity and reduce queuing. The works will require the Centre to be closed from Thursday 24 October for approximately 8 weeks. Full site closure provided the most effective way to deliver the changes required.

During its closure the nearest Recycling Centres to use are:

- Ware Recycling Centre, Westmill Road, Ware, SG12 0EL
- Hoddesdon Recycling Centre, Pindar Road Industrial Estate, Hoddesdon, EN11 0BZ

Full details on opening days and times plus further information on each one can be viewed at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hwrc

Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for The Environment at Hertfordshire County Council said: "We are excited to be creating a new and improved experience for residents using Bishop's Stortford Recycling Centre, one that will offer them a quicker and more efficient way to recycle.

"The changes at Bishop's Stortford form part of a £50m investment in waste related projects across the county, supporting our ambition to send zero waste to landfill by 2030. We are creating a new Shredding Facility at Waterdale, together with improvements to its existing Waste Transfer Station, another new Transfer Station in Ware, while similar Recycling Centre improvements are also taking place at Berkhamsted."

New Ware Library opens its doors

Hertfordshire County Council is pleased to announce that Ware library has reopened today, 14 October, in its new central High Street home – just three minutes stroll from the previous site.

The new library features more modern and accessible facilities, a fresh look and feel and a vibrant and expanded children's section. The team worked quickly to move 12,000 books, 10 computers, 2 self-service kiosks, a photocopier and public printer so that disruption was kept to a minimum for the 5,500 Ware residents that use the facilities every month.

The refurbished library boasts a single-level, accessible layout with improved public and staff spaces.

Enhancements include new furniture, carpets, and flooring, as well as energy-efficient lighting, heating, and insulation. Key features include:

- **Brand New Roof:** Ensuring a safe and comfortable environment.
- **Pod-Type Enquiry Desks and Help Points:** For easy access to information.
- **Accessible Toilet and Baby Change Facilities:** Making the library family-friendly.
- **Expanded Children's Area:** Featuring a bespoke 'Gazebo' seat, suspended 'clouds', and a river bed-themed carpet.
- **Dedicated Young Adult Area:** With seating and graphics chosen by the 15 young volunteers who work at the library.
- **Public PCs and Hublets:** Samsung Galaxy tablets available for use within the library.
- **Comprehensive Services:** Including scanning, photocopying, and printing, with Wi-Fi printing from personal devices (charges apply).

Support for those who need it most Last month the government announced that it was extending the Household Support Fund (HSF) for a further six months until the end of March next year. Since the launch of the grant in October 2021, we have been using this funding to support residents to deal with the rising cost of living. On Thursday 17 October councillors will discuss plans for how we will spend this £6.17million of additional funding.

The plans set out proposals that will see us continue to work with a range of partners across the county to make sure we can get the right help to those who need it, at the right time. This targeted approach will mean that residents can be supported and get assistance from the county council, local district and borough councils, and a range of other community and voluntary sector organisations. The proposed offer of support includes:

- Supermarket food vouchers for families receiving benefits-related free school meals for the October half-term, Christmas school holidays and February half-term next year. The number of families eligible for this support has grown by nearly a quarter since this funding began in 2021.
- Our Welfare Assistance Scheme, helping households on low incomes facing an immediate financial crisis, including providing outreach clinics to support the those who are unable to access our online support.
- New 'Winter Essential' and 'Winter Tangible' schemes, providing supermarket vouchers, heated blankets, warm bedding and clothes to families in crisis, known to our social care teams.
- Support for food banks and help with energy costs delivered by district and borough councils and Hertfordshire Community Trust.
- Support for homeless persons and survivors of domestic abuse.
- £150 vouchers for new pensioners registered for Pension Credits.
- £50 vouchers for care leavers over the age of 19, identified by our Care Leavers team.
- Further funding for our Money Advice Unit and Citizens Advice to enable them to continue offering financial and debt support.

NB. The Fund has now been extended by the government for a further year.

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Council considers new flood protection scheme for homes

Flood Action Week takes place from Monday 14 to Sunday 20 October and with recent localised flooding seen across parts of Hertfordshire, the county council has repeated its call to residents who have a property that has been or is at risk of flooding.

The county council is specifically interested in hearing from those residents who want to find out more about measures to prevent future flooding taking place.

A previous Flood Resilience Scheme was available to properties that were often in locations where only a few homes were at risk of flooding. Properties that met the criteria for support had the chance to receive a grant of up to £6,000, which was put towards measures such as flood barriers, flood doors and smart airbricks. Recommendations were made by an independent surveyor and installer.

Since July, the council has been investigating the demand for any future scheme which would support homeowners to ensure that their properties are protected as much as possible.

If demand for a new scheme is evident, the council is committed to exploring the feasibility of a new scheme with the ambition of offering grants to homeowners.

Eric Buckmaster, Executive Member for Environment at Hertfordshire County Council, said: "Over the last couple of weeks, parts of the county have seen some of the worst, and most concentrated rainfall in living memory leading to localised flooding which I know must be devastating for those affected.

"While the previous scheme and funding has been used, we really want to hear from residents who want to take steps to prevent flooding in the future. We'll then use this feedback to investigate and if necessary, shape a future scheme for the benefit of residents."

Community input to boost Hertfordshire's biodiversity "exceeds expectations" Over 300 potential sites identified across the county, where natural habitats can be enhanced, created or protected

Running over the summer, the events called on residents, charities and businesses to inform its Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), in an effort to better understand where biodiversity and natural habitats could be created, enhanced or protected. Over 300 sites were put forward across Hertfordshire, providing valuable insight which can now be taken forward by technical experts to form the LNRS strategy.

HNRP is entering the next phase to develop the strategy. Technical experts, wildlife groups and landowners will analyse the insight gathered, alongside ecological data, to help shape a joined-up strategic approach to maximise nature recovery in Hertfordshire.

Running alongside 47 other regions across England, the expert analysis will inform a detailed map of priority areas for biodiversity enhancement, to guide future restoration efforts. The user-friendly and engaging map will be shared publicly to highlight areas of habitat and biodiversity priorities.

Councillor Eric Buckmaster, Chair of the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership, said: "From small allotments to sprawling fields, the insight has helped to 'fill the gaps' in our understanding of the county, creating a patchwork of potential sites across Hertfordshire. Following technical input, the resulting map will be able to identify areas for initiatives, ranging from supporting wildflower meadows and tree planting, to river and wetland restoration."

Recycling Centre Reuse shops Community Donations Outreach Progress. Ensuring equality of opportunity to participate in the Community Donation Scheme is a key focus this year and there has been a lot of outreach activity.

This quarter we presented the scheme to professionals at; Families First Support meetings in North Herts, East Herts and St Albans, Welwyn Hatfield Healthy Hub Partner drop-in, as well as to district and borough colleagues through WasteAware. This has been useful in ensuring that our colleagues who work with families in need know how to access the scheme.

In July we directly approached 50 schools, targeting those located in the areas of highest deprivation within Hertfordshire. We introduced the scheme, the availability of free educational talks and workshops and the offer of free composters. So far, we have received Community Donations requests from 6 of these schools, wicker baskets have been the most popular items!

This quarter we have fulfilled 43 community donation requests, a 53% increase on the same period last year.

A key improvement this quarter is that we have fulfilled requests from 25 different organisations, compared to just seven in Q2 2023. Recipients include schools, charities and individual households supported by HCC and district and borough services. Demonstrating that our outreach work has increased access to the scheme.

The process for applying to primary, junior and middle schools in Hertfordshire opens on 1 November 2024.

If your child is due to start primary school or move on to a junior or middle school next year, make sure you apply for a place in good time.

The easiest way to apply for a school place for September 2025 is to visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions and complete the online application form. Online applications can be amended at any time before the closing date, and you can access your school offer before allocation letters are received and accept your school allocation online.

Last year, 99 per cent of parents applied this way and found the system quick, easy and secure

Cllr Eric Buckmaster, November 2024

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COUNCILLOR ACTIONS ARISING

Cllr Tom Payne

- Attempt to fit litter bin at bus stop
- MOG re overgrown hedge/liaise with Cllr Eric Buckmaster re recharge
- Liaise with Sam Clark on Modification order for footpath and adoption of FP from Broadfields to High Wych being adopted by HCC
- Footpath from Broadfields to High Wych Lane: contact Clarion Futures Charity
- Allotments (with Cllr Carrie Payne)
- Gilston development

Cllr John Andreotti

- HTC liaison
- Car park tree removal (with JJ)

Cllr Keith Jordan

- Liaise with BB&C Fencing for replacement field entrance gate

Cllr Carrie Payne

- Monitor Highways issues, including parking
- Allotments (with Cllr Tom Payne)

Cllr Jacqueline Jackson

- Footpaths, Public Rights of Way and accessibility matters
- Tree removal at Allen's Green and HWMH (with JA)
- Price for notice boards perspex and refurb
- Attend the next Police Cross Border meeting and report back to Council

Clerk

- Set up agreed bank payments
- Planning comments
- Hall booking for next meeting
- Order replacement KGV field gates
- Affinity Water re replacement water meter
- Update draft budget and precept for January 2025 meeting

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