

**Minutes of the High Wych Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 14th May 2025
8pm in High Wych Memorial Hall**

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

Present: One members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.15pm.

ACTION

25.037 Apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None (all present)
2. Others: Cllr Keith Jordan, who has submitted a letter of resignation, Cllr Eric Buckmaster, Cllr Ian Devonshire, PC Shelly Marshall

25.038 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. **Interests declared:** Cllr Liz Faulkner – company invoice payments for approval
2. **Dispensation requests:** Cllr Liz Faulkner: for financial matters in order to ensure a quorum. The dispensation will not extend to any negotiations of the litter bin collections, and will run until the Parish Council elections in May 2027. **RESOLVED: To grant the dispensation as requested.**

25.039 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 12th March 2025. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

Clerk

The meeting was not suspended for public comments

25.040 Casual Vacancy

The Clerk reported that no one has applied to be co-opted. It was agreed to advertise the vacancy and to check with anyone who expresses an interest in joining the Council.

**Clerk/
All**

25.041 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman had no announcements.

TP

25.042 East Herts Rural Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)

1. Crime report

PC Shelly Marshall provided a written report as follows:

Apologies for not being able to attend in person, local officers are abstracted on other duties today.

Crime remains low in High Wych. The previous policing priority of reducing retail crime has now ended, we successfully achieved a 70% reduction of this crime type during the period of January – April 2025.

The new priority for the area has been set as reducing youth related anti-social behaviour, we will be supporting this with some local engagements, the next one will be 17th June 6-7pm in High Wych play park, this will be followed by a drop in at The Coffee Lounge on 14th August between 10-11am.

More details to follow on these engagements on Herts connected.

Officers have been out twice in the last fortnight in High Wych with the speed camera, majority of vehicles were found to be driving safely within the speed limit. This will continue throughout the summer.

We hope to be able to support some local events taking place in High Wych over the summer.

PC Shelly Marshall

The Parish Council again noted that although the coffee lounge event provides a useful networking opportunity, it believed alternative venues and time should be considered. Also that the event should be combined with walking around the parish in order to meet more people. The 17th June play area visit at 6-7pm was questioned, unless the police had knowledge that it is a time when numbers of youth gather there. A specific invitation to be extended to attend the Scarecrow Festival. Cllr Liz Faulkner agreed to follow up these points with PC Shelly Marshall.

LF

2. Cross border update

Update on the village-wide plan for all parishes to have an AED: The cost will be apportioned pro rata based on the population of each village. First Responders are looking for volunteers to help administer and run the scheme.

JJ

25.043 Reports by County and District Councillors

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

District Cllr Ian Devonshire: No report received.

25.044 Planning

1. New Applications:

3/25/041/FUL	Surrounded, Coveys Lane. Retrospective change of use from grazing land to residential garden and installation of ground level solar panels. RESOLVED: No objections	Clerk
3/25/0713/HH	Leaky Cauldron Corner. Erection of detached one bay cartlodge and home gym with associated landscaping. RESOLVED: No objections	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:

3/25/0803/ARPN	Greenleys, Slough Road: Change of use of agricultural building to C3 (residential) for single dwelling. RESOLVED: No comments	Clerk
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25.045 Finance

1. Report of the Council's Accounts at year-end 31st March 2025

Opening cashbook balance 28th February 2025	22,651.28
Plus income to 31 st March	15.00
Minus expenditure to 31 st March	3,790.33
Balance available to Council at 31st March (cashbook balance)	18,875.95
Plus unrepresented payments	0.00
Reconciled Bank statement/cashbook balance 31st March 2025	18,875.95

RESOLVED: That the Accounts Statement to year-end 31st March be approved.

Clerk

2. Accounts Reconciliation at year-end 31st March 2025

Cashbook balance 31 st March	£18,875.95
Bank balance 31 st March	£18,875.95

RESOLVED: To agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

3. Performance against 2024/25 budget at year-end 31st March 2025

	Budget	Actual 31st March
Income total	95,925	71,601
Section 106	49,950	49,950
PWLB Loan	<u>25,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Income balance without S106 or PWLB	20,975	21,651
	Budget	Actual 31st March
Expenditure Net of VAT	98,862	70,386
Play Area redevelopment	75,000	49,500
PWLB Loan servicing	3,000	<u>0</u>
Expenditure balance without S106 or PWLB	20,862	20,886

Budgetted deficit	-2,937
Actual surplus	1,214
Opening bank balance 1 April 2024	17,963
Closing bank balance 31 st March 2025	18,876

RESOLVED: To agree the performance against budget as presented.

4. Payments for approval: All expenditure to be made under The General Power of Competence As at 8th May

		Value	VAT incl
Color-Board Ltd	Litter and poo bins April	120.00	20.00
High Wych Mem Hall	Post Office subsidy Q2 April-June	87.50	
Clerk Reimburse	Office stationery	4.49	
High Wych Mem Hall	Electricity: Car park lights	28.95	
Color-Board Ltd	Litter and poo bins May	120.00	20.00
Clerk	Expenses April-May	21.80	
Clerk	Salary May	498.04	
HMRC	PAYE May	124.40	
HMRC	Employer's NIC May	30.82	
Mokut Mower Services*	Grass cutting May*	350.00	
** Grass cutting KGV Field High Wych and Allen's Green village green			
VAT included To be reclaimed under VAT Act 1994 (1), (3)			40.00

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

Clerk

5. Annual Governance and Accountability Return AGAR 2024-25

- 1. Exemption.** Noted: That the Parish Council does not meet the Exemption criteria this year. Clerk
- 2. Internal Audit Report** (page 4). Received and noted as signed. Clerk
- 3. Section 1 Annual Governance Statement** (page 5). **RESOLVED: To approve as presented.** The Clerk and the Chairman signed the Statement. Clerk/TP
- 4. Section 2 Accounting Statements** (page 6). Considered as signed by the RFO (Responsible Financial Officer).
- 5. Section 2 Accounting Statements** (page 6). **RESOLVED: To approve as presented by the RFO.** The Chairman signed the Statement. TP
- 6. Exercise of Public Rights.** **RESOLVED: To set the 30-working day period for the Exercise of Public Rights as Tuesday 3rd June to Monday 14th July 2025.** Clerk

25.046 1. Highways

- Speed and Volume study for Blounts Lane, Allen's Green: Cllr Eric Buckmaster and Cllr Tom Payne are looking into the parishioner's request. EB/TP
- TRO27498 Bonnys Row closure: Noted
- Other issues: None raised

2. Footpaths and other Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- No issues raise.

3. Other Parish Matters

1. High Wych Memorial Hall and car park

- Installation of a ramp and door adjustment to the Green Room: A quote for removing some parking lines on the car park was very expensive. It was therefore agreed to look at other more cost effective ways to achieve the result. JJ
- Faulty car park light replacements: These have been fitted and the invoice received. £60.64 to be added to the next bill.

2. **FOI and SAR requests.** It was noted that the submission deadlines of 1st and 4th April were met and that a subsequent request was fulfilled. **Clerk**
- 25.047 1. Playing Fields and buildings**
1. **Harlow Theatre Company**
1. No issues raised.
2. **Play area**
1. (i) The Sovereign Play inspection report of 2nd April was received and circulated to members on 11th April. **Clerk**
- (ii) The Clerk reported that the annual RPII inspection arranged by EHDC was ordered on 16th May and will be undertaken in the summer. **Clerk**
2. Other issues: None reported.
2. **Allotments report**
1. Cllr Carrie Payne asked the Clerk to issue an eviction notice **Clerk/CP**
2. Water meter update: No report. **Clerk**
- 25.048 Correspondence:** The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:
- Parishioner /Cllr Eric Buckmaster: Speed & Volume study, Blounts Lane (25.046.1.1)
 - HCC: TRO27498 Bonnys Row closure notice (25.046.1.2)
- 25.049 Late items and items for future agendas**
1. Late items: None received.
2. Items for future agendas and other matters: **Clerk**
- Relocation of goal posts on the KGV playing field for H&S reasons.
- 25.050 Date and venue of next Parish Council meeting**
- Noted: That High Wych Memorial Hall Committee Room is again available on Wednesdays and has therefore been booked for alternate meetings for the remainder of 2025
- Ordinary Council Meeting, 8pm Wednesday 16th July at Alen's Green Village Hall** **Clerk**

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

Signed.....

APPENDIX A

25.044.2 25.044.2 PLANNING DECISION NOTICES for information only as at 14th May

3/24/2326/HH	8 Mansfield RECONSULTATION: Erect rear extensions	GRANTED
3/25/0384/HH	Mountfitchet, High Wych Road. Remove conservatory and chimney. Roof extension and loft conversion; single storey rear extension, single storey side and front infill extension; front roof extension	Awaited
3/25/0256/HH	Crumps Farm: Erect garden room and implement shed. RETROSPECTIVE	Awaited
3/25/0633/CLPO	2 Burstead Cottages, Spellbrook. Single storey rear extension	Awaited

APPENDIX B

E Buckmaster County Councillor Report May 2025

County Elections May 1st 2025

It is a real privilege to have been re-elected as County Councillor for Sawbridgeworth Division. Which includes the 8 parish councils of Sawbridgeworth, High Wych, Eastwick and Gilston, Hunsdon, Widford, Wareside, Stanstead Abbots and part of St Margaret's. It is one of 10 Divisions for East Herts but it is a large area which on District level is served by 9 District

Councillors, 45 percent of the total.

These local elections were different in that now 5 main political parties contest them, as they do at national level, Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Green and Reform. It is very likely that a certain proportion of people were voting on national issues, perhaps as a protest, although many of the traditional parties were campaigning just on local matters and achievements and intentions of the candidates in delivering local services.

Of note is the fact that the Liberal Democrat's in total polled a similar percentage to the Conservatives but achieved 9 more seats. Since no party achieved an absolute majority of seats the Council is now in No Overall Control. As I write the expectation is that the Liberal Democrat's will come to an arrangement with the Green Party and Labour which will provide a slim majority of just two. Absences from Council, eg through ill health, will then prove challenging, so there will then need a good deal of cross party support to proceed with important business. This will be of great importance too as we prepare for the National Governments aim for devolution and local government reorganisation, which is intended to replace the existing two tier system of County and Districts with one or more unitary councils. Interesting and challenging times ahead.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

I have been chairing the Board for this Strategy and Plan. we are now in Pre-Consultation! Pre-consultation is the 28 day period in which the Supporting Authorities (10 districts and Natural England) are provided with the draft LNRS and provided with an opportunity to object to Hertfordshire County Council taking this draft out to public consultation. Pre-consultation is a legal requirement that Hertfordshire County Council must fulfil. A number of Steering Groups including various agencies and Authorities across Hertfordshire worked towards bringing the plan together. Once approved by supporting authorities it will go out to public consultation.

Winter service 24/25 comes to an end - 60% more gritting than last year

Hertfordshire County Council's highways team have drawn their winter seasonal work to an end and their fleet of 70 gritters and crews are no longer on standby for sub-zero temperatures.

The highways winter season runs from 1 October to 30 April each year and over the course of the 2024/25 winter season, gritters were out 61 times, up from 38 the year before.

These runs covered nearly 150,000 km, the equivalent of travelling three-and-a-half times around the Earth, and over a third of those runs were in just 13 days, at the start of January, during this winter's most severe cold snap.

Over the course of the season, more than 15,000 tonnes of salt was used on Hertfordshire's roads, and just under 100 new salt bins were added to the road network, which means we now have approximately 1,500 located across the county.

Our teams processed nearly 300 Winter Self-Help salt orders, providing salt for community organisations to grit their own area, this included almost 200 schools.

Over 400 residents took part in our social media competition to name our first electric gritter. The winner 'Claudia Sprinklevan' has been out on all 61 runs this year and has proven to be as reliable as the rest of our gritters at a fraction of the carbon output.

This vehicle is known as an Electric Quick-Change Body (EQCB) with a gritter, tipper, and cage body, which means that out of winter season, you will still see Claudia out and about on general highways maintenance duties.

Subsidence of Highway Officers will be touring East with one of the Geotech experts, looking at a number of sites where ditches have started to encroach and undermine the carriageway. This tour will be including the one at St Georges Cottages at Babbs Green.

The whole idea is to get a more educated idea on how these can be fixed easily, rather than take a more prolonged investigative route which would only inconvenience the local population.

Obviously, each site will have its own issues, but it's a starting point.

HCC Minerals and Waste Local Plan update

- The March 2025 Forward Plan contains an item for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan to be taken to Sustainable Economic Growth Panel on 11 July, and Cabinet/Council on 21/22 July.
- The item will seek approval to publish a Regulation 19 Plan for formal consultation, and to subsequently submit the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate with a view to hosting an Examination in Hearing to consider whether the Plan can be adopted as a Development Plan Document.
- To accompany this, there would be an update to the Minerals and Waste Development

Scheme, a statutory requirement setting out the timeframe for Plan production/adoption.

A013/25 Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) Publication for Formal Representations; Subsequent Submission to the Secretary of State; and Publication of a revised Minerals and Waste Development Scheme Cabinet 21/07/2025 Council 22/07/2025 Sustainable Economic Growth Christopher Stanek 01992 658398 Report of the Executive Director of Growth & Environment.

Artistic collaboration creates showpiece for new foster carer recruitment campaign

Children in Hertfordshire are using textile art to share their foster care experiences, kicking off a community quilt project as part of Hertfordshire County Council's new campaign to recruit more foster carers.

The campaign, called HELP, aims to amplify the voices of children and young people in foster care, inspiring more people in Hertfordshire to consider this rewarding role. The HELP campaign also seeks to spread the word about the positive impact foster caring can have on the lives of children who can't live with their birth parents.

Hertfordshire County Council has teamed up with local textile artist Connie Deans-Harding, from Maker & Mind, as part of the HELP campaign. Connie is providing therapeutic art experiences for children in the council's care, helping them express their feelings about foster care through art.

Eric Buckmaster County Councillor

COUNCILLOR ACTIONS ARISING

Cllr Tom Payne

- Allotments (with Cllr Carrie Payne)
- Gilston development
- HWMH – liaise on ramp to Green Room
- Blounts Lane S&V study – liaise with Cllr Eric Buckmaster

Cllr John Andreotti

- HTC liaison
- Car park liaison

Cllr Carrie Payne

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

Cllr Jacqueline Jackson

- Footpaths, Public Rights of Way and accessibility matters
- Liaise with HWMH on ramp to Green Room
- Attend the next Police Cross Border meeting and report back to Council
- Follow up co-option prospects

Cllr Liz Faulkner

- Liaise with police on parish event meetings
- Cross border police meetings

Clerk

- Set up agreed bank payments
- Planning comments
- Hall booking for next meeting
- Everflow Water re replacement water meter
- AGAR Internal and External audits