

PARISH COUNCIL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY  
Minutes and Action Points

**Date / Time:** 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 8.00pm

**Location:** Wallington Village Hall

**Councillors Present:** Kate Heath (KH) – Chair

**In attendance:** Mark SG Hopley (MSGH) - Clerk, Steve Jarvis (District and County Councillor) &  
1 member of the Parish

| Item | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Status / Action |
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| 1    | <b>To confirm the Minutes of Wallington Parish Assembly meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Minutes were <i>carried unanimously</i> as a true and accurate record of the proceedings. No matters arising, other than those on the agenda. Minutes were signed by the Chair.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                 |
| 2    | <b>Report from the Parish Councillors on the years activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>See below and attached for the full report.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                 |
| 3    | <b>Report from the District and County Councillor.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Feedback has been very positive on the new Wallington Road re-surfacing to the point that other villages are now demanding the same!</li><li>The rest of the road towards Redhill and Sandon is planned to be done later this year and there is a proposal to complete the resurfacing of Wallington Road to the bypass roundabout.</li><li>The new waste collection schedule, including the new waste bin, is due to commence in August 2025 and new bins will be delivered from May.</li><li>FP22 update – the latest information that SJ has is that the council were waiting to hear back from the landowners.</li><li>Feedback on the Cumberlow Green Lightrock Solar Farm presentation that was held in Rushden Village Hall recently was that the presentation, although very slick, did not reflect the reality of what would be delivered. There would be noise, and it would be visible, so the Parish Council agreed that a close, watchful eye be kept on the planning process.</li><li>Residents should be aware that their opinion matters and if there is an opportunity to comment on the plans then they should take every opportunity to do so.</li><li>SJ commented on the proposed changes to unitary councils.</li><li>SJ gave a summary of the changes proposed under the NHDC Community Governance Review 2025 which involved potential changes to election dates and parish boundaries, as well as the minimum number of parish councillors. SJ encouraged parishioners to respond to the review otherwise decisions may be made that are not welcomed.</li><li>SJ did reiterate that there were no proposed changes to arrangements for parish councils.</li></ul> |                 |
| 4    | The Community Drivesafe scheme has changed its guidelines and rules so that areas with a 20mph speed limit cannot now do their own speed monitor surveys. KH will                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | KH              |

| Item | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Status / Action                      |
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|      | follow this up with the Police and Crime Commissioner directly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                      |
| 5    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that the Luton Airport expansion programme had been approved.</li> <li>The Parish Council keep a watching brief over the plans for both Luton and Stanstead airports and are copied into RELAS communications as well as directly through NHDC and NHC.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                      |
| 6    | <b>Finance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MSGH presented the accounts to the year-end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.</li> <li>The unaudited accounts show a surplus of £948, which is a budgeted surplus of £661 and an unbudgeted surplus of £287 (made up of £156 bank interest and £131 VAT recovery)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                      |
| 7    | <b>Matters Raised by residents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The matter of the long grass near FP22 was raised and a question whether it was planned to cut the grass and if so, when? KH pointed out that the grass cutting was a matter for HCC and they should be contacted directly. It was noted that the grass was not too long now. SJ was asked if could enquire as to whether FP22 was now on the cut list.</li> <li>SJ suggested that the PC contact Robert Lloyd at HCC who is responsible for footpath maintenance at HCC.</li> <li>A resident expressed concerns that the horses kept in one of the fields in Wallington were quite overbearing when trying to walk on one of the public footpaths. The PC noted this but as this is outside of their powers, the only thing the PC could suggest was if they could find a way to make representations on the resident's behalf.</li> <li>The issue about the traffic build up at the crossroads in Baldock was raised and a question as to whether the left filter lane could changed to make it clearer to road users that you can filter left at your own will. SJ commented that when the Baldock building development starts the whole Baldock road layout will change accordingly.</li> <li>There was a query about how the Herts Lynx bus app works. The Clerk volunteered to show the resident how to best use the app.</li> </ul> | <p>SJ</p> <p>KH / GL</p> <p>MSGH</p> |
| 8    | <b>Confirm date of next meeting and any items to be included on that agenda.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next PC Meeting due on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                      |
|      | The Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                      |

### **RWPC - Wallington Parish Assembly**

- The PC chair alternates between Rushden and Wallington and this year was Rushden's turn. The PC had a new chair: Jenny Barlow. Other members for

Rushden are Steve Pettyfer and Sue Lewis, and for Wallington Graham Lamb and Kate Heath.

- The Parish Council domain name has been changed to an official “.gov.uk” identity, which has only recently been made available for Parish Councils, along with funding for making the change. Thanks to our clerks for arranging the switchover. The previous PC email addresses continue to be forwarded to our inboxes.
- This year’s Internal Audit was carried out by Andy Nunn for the first time. Andy has kindly taken over from Ann Warner who was the Parish Council’s independent volunteer auditor for many years. The Parish Council expressed its thanks to Ann for all her years of audit service.
- There were no new planning applications in the Wallington PC area during the financial year 2024-25.
- KH and GL had a meeting with representatives from NHDC (owners of the land which the PC leases), the new manager of Herts County Council Rights of Way team (responsible for footpaths) and Settle Homes (local housing association). It was left that NHDC and HCC would seek to make a firm proposal as soon as possible, including reviewing options that had previously been discounted to see whether a lighter touch solution could be found which would gain agreement. The most recent information was that they are still “working on it”.
- Meanwhile the unofficial footpath with steps down to the road has been blocked off with some ‘warning – hazard’ tape, either by HCC or by the landowner, as the steps had not been maintained for several years and are in a very poor state. We gather that residents who have the original FP22 going through their gardens have been told by HCC that they could be liable, should any member of the public injure themselves walking on the original footpath route. We note that this route is blocked by planting and garden fences. The Parish Council is not responsible for footpaths and therefore should not be a decision-making party in this matter, other than to protect the land we lease. We continue to try and facilitate contact between stakeholders, and to emphasise that, while we appreciate the concerns of affected householders, all Wallington residents need and want a safe path which they can use.
- Highways – HCC resurfaced the road between Wallington and Baldock. Further work is planned through and on the other side of the village later this year. HCC Highways will inform residents ahead of work taking place.

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- The PC received a request from the Wallington bell ringers for a donation towards new ropes. We suggested that they contact Steve Jarvis to see if there are any District or County Council grants available. The Parish Council work very hard in keeping their funding requirement as low as possible and this means that unfortunately there are no spare funds to offer grants or donations.
  - We planned to go ahead with some longer-term tree work this winter, to try and avoid potentially damaging failures. Unfortunately, it took much longer than anticipated to gather the required three quotes for the work, and early storms resulted in a fallen tree before the work could be carried out, resulting in damage to overhead broadband lines which had been installed through the trees. The PC recorded its thanks to those residents who were involved in the speedy clearing / removal of fallen branches.
  - Our next tree inspection is due. When we attempted to book with our most recent provider, the cost had gone up by 29%, just 1 year after the last tender process. We are currently gathering alternative quotes to try and get the tree inspection completed within budget. Again, this is not a quick process, but we are hopeful that the inspection will be able to go ahead soon, leaving the planned amount of PC funds available for any further tree work may be needed.
  - There is an ongoing proposal to build a large solar farm in the River Beane valley beyond Rushden, and a related consultation has been taking place. A local protest group contacted the PC, and we agreed to pass on their contact details, along with information about the proposal, so that Wallington residents can form their own views and object or support as they wish. We did not feel it was appropriate for the PC to respond to the consultation because it is not a statutory consultee, and various councillors had been contacted by residents supporting both sides of the debate.
  - As part of a widespread Community Governance Review, North Herts Council has put forward a proposal to change the boundaries of the RWPC area to include the whole of Redhill. Currently the Wallington side of the road is split, being mostly in Wallington with a tiny minority of houses in Rushden administrative parishes, while the Sandon side of the road is in Sandon PC area. The PC debated this subject, but we decided not to propose it ourselves because there did not seem to be a drive from Redhill residents to make a change. Now that NHC have proposed it, we would of course accept the change if the consultation favours putting it into place.

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- Following the tragic discovery of the late Victoria Greenwood near Wallington in November 2023 we introduced a PC Safeguarding Awareness Policy, raising awareness of violence against women and children, and signposting to relevant organisations via noticeboards and our website. Updated posters are displayed in Rushden and Wallington, and on the PC website, after every PC meeting.
  - Community Drivesafe Update: The Hertfordshire Drivesafe Scheme has changed its requirements. 10 signatures are needed to support taking part in the Scheme, and only 5 volunteers are now needed. They must be trained in the operation of the equipment. Signatures and volunteers can come from across the Parish. We plan to communicate this across Wallington and Rushden and report back on potential engagement.
  - Housing Assessment Survey – Update. We hosted a guest speaker from Community Development Action (CDA) Herts in 2022, and we planned to ask him back after the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, when it would be appropriate to revisit the services that they provide in relation to Affordable Housing Needs. The invitation was extended during 2024. Unfortunately, funding constraints mean that the organisation now must focus on areas with larger development opportunities and will not be able to include Wallington after all.