

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes and Action Points

Date / Time: Thursday 7th May 2026, 8.30pm

Location: Wallington Village Hall

Councillors Present: Sue Lewis (SL) – New Chair, Kate Heath (KH) – Ex-Chair, Jenny Barlow (JB), Steve Pettyfer (SP),

In attendance: Mark SG Hopley (MSGH) - Clerk, Michelle Hopley (MH) – Clerk, Tracy Westgate (NHDC Community Partnership Officer) & 1 member of the public via Zoom

Item	Description	Status / Action
26/012	To receive and accept apologies for absence - Graham Lamb was absent but no apology was received in advance. - Steve Jarvis sent his apologies.	
26/013	Declarations of interest and dispensations a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda - None. b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests - None. c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate - NA.	
26/014	To confirm & sign the Minutes of Rushden and Wallington Parish Council meetings: Rushden & Wallington Parish Council meetings held on Thursday 22nd January 2026 – <i>unanimously confirmed</i>.	
26/015	Report from the District and County Councillor. - Update on Herts Lynx service - There is a maximum number of seats that can be booked in a single booking. The whole bus can be booked in two tranches if required. - The bus can be diverted if the diversion does not delay the bus over its original destination timescale. - An outstanding question from the village assembly meetings was the one about trips within Stevenage that appear to be monopolising the drivers routes and times, thereby denying those in rural locations the whole benefit of the 'on-demand' bus service.	SJ
26/016	- Update on Solar Farm carried over from the village assemblies. If solar farm applicants have not already made an application to be connected to the national grid then they would unlikely be granted permission until 2031 due to lack of capacity. - However, both the local applications have been granted permission to connect to the grid so this latest delay by the National Grid will not affect these 2 applications.	

Chair's Signature:

Date:

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Minutes and Action Points

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26/017	- Community Drivesafe – KH reported no change to date except that 30mph and 40mph limits are being prioritised over 20mph. - However, the opportunity is still available to residents should they wish to do the training course and offer their time to monitor vehicles through their villages.	
26/018	- Rushden surface dressing has been completed but they are still awaiting road painting. KH reported that Wallington road painting has now been carried out so it is possible that road painting takes place shortly after the road repairs. - It was noted that the road between Redhill and Mill End still needs doing and is getting significantly worse. Could Steve Jarvis get an update for the PC?	SJ
26/019	- Wallington Footpath22 (FP22) – It remains inaccessible by the official route. However, we have heard from Steve Jarvis that the landowners involved have agreed to a solution but one party will not pay their share of the cost. - The Parish Council have not been told what this solution is, so are not in a position to know if it is acceptable or not. SJ to investigate what the proposed solution is and communicate this to the Parish Council.	SJ
26/020	Parish Trees – Wallington deferred the tree inspection in 2025 but will be doing one in 2026 and will take any action recommended in this report.	
26/021	- MSGH asked if the new safeguarding policy, recently circulated, was sufficient for our purposes and if OK the Parish Council should adopt this policy with the proviso that the policy would be adapted as and when it was felt necessary. <i>This was unanimously agreed.</i> - KH circulated some new safeguarding posters for the notice boards and the website.	
26/022	Update on the Zoom trial seemed to be met with a positive response so it was agreed to continue the Zoom format at meetings held in Wallington Village Hall where fast internet access is available. As Rushden Village Hall has no internet and a poor mobile signal it will not be possible to do this when meetings are held there.	
26/023	A grant application has now been submitted for the additional dog bin on Southern Green. The deadline for the June grant approval has been missed so this will go forward to the September grant submission meeting.	
26/024	A resident has requested that the ramp to the bus stop outside Mill End Nursery be repaired. Repairs will be done to this as soon as possible.	
26/025	Planning including an update on planning applications being added to the PC Website. - Wallington Councillors and Clerks submitted a response to NHDC regarding the sheds / dog kennels at No.11 The Street Wallington. The reply from the planning department is that they are very busy and will respond in due course! - Baldock development plans are ongoing. These are communicated to parishioners via the village WhatsApp groups and on the Parish Council website. - No. 8 Church End Road, Rushden. The owners presented their plans to the Parish	

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Date:

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes and Action Points

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	Council and it was felt that these were sympathetic to the building itself and the village and therefore there were no objections from the Parish Council.	
26/026	Finance: Spend to 31.4.26 MSGH presented the accounts to 31st April 2026. At present we are £4.28 underspent against our budget, 1 month into the financial year.	
26/027	Confirm date of next meeting and any items to be included on that agenda. - Thursday 17th September 2026 - Parish Council meeting (Rushden VH) - Thursday 21st January 2027 – Parish Council meeting (Wallington VH) - Tuesday 13th April 2027 – Wallington Parish Assembly (Wallington VH) - Wednesday 14th April 2027 – Rushden Parish Assembly (Rushden VH) - Thursday 13th May 2027 – Parish Council AGM and PC meeting (Wallington VH) <i>Thursday 16th September 2027 - Parish Council meeting (Rushden VH)</i> <i>Thursday 20th January 2028 – Parish Council meeting (Wallington VH)</i>	
	The Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm	

Chair's Signature:

Date:

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes and Action Points

Date / Time: Thursday 22nd January 2026, 8.00pm

Location: Wallington Village Hall

Councillors Present: Kate Heath (KH) - CHAIR, Steve Pettyfer (SP), Graham Lamb (GL), Jenny Barlow (JB), Sue Lewis (SL)

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

Item	Description	Status / Action
25/056	To receive and accept apologies for absence None received.	-
25/057	Declarations of interest and dispensations a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda - None. b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests - None. c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate - NA.	-
25/058	To confirm & sign the Minutes of Rushden and Wallington Parish Council meetings: - Extraordinary Planning Meeting held on Tuesday 5th March 2024 (Papers had been overlooked for signing at prior meetings) – CONFIRMED - Rushden & Wallington Parish Council meetings held on Thursday 18th September 2025 - CONFIRMED	-
25/059	Report from the District and County Councillor. - Bennetts Lane will be surface dressed in April - Redhill will be patched in February along the section of road from the village to the junction with Rushden/Roe Green Road. - Wallington Road will be completed between the A505 roundabout and the old Wallington Road. - The large potholes in the tunnel on the A505 have now been fixed. - Discussions are ongoing regarding lowering the speed limit on the A505 following the 2 fatalities before Christmas. - An additional 2 vehicles will be added to the Herts Lynx fleet to make a total of 9. These vehicles will be smaller 9 seater buses. The only issue is that these smaller vehicles cannot accommodate wheelchairs so it is important when booking to make sure that if wheelchair access is required that this is made clear on the booking.	

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Date:

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes and Action Points

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	SP raised the point that during the recent freezing weather, Bennetts Lane, Treacle Lane and the road heading to Southern Green Farm in Rushden did not get visited by a gritter. SJ will investigate	SJ
25/060	Footpath 22 update from GL. No progress since the September meeting. However, it was agreed that some action needed to be taken by the PC as there is an increasing possibility that a member of the public could suffer an injury. It was agreed unanimously that GL should draft a letter / email from the PC, sent by the Clerk, to HCC and HDC and Highways requesting that a deadline be set by which a decision must be made by them.	GL
25/061	- MSGH proposed adopting new digital and data management regulations for the PC. This is in response to the requirement to follow Assertion 10 of the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Report). In the same way that the PC review and approve the financial regulations, the risk register, audit report etc. each year we are now required to have PC regulations that cover digital and data management including personal data and compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). - We already comply with digital security by having moved to the .Gov.uk email addresses and our new .Gov.uk website address. Our website also complies with the digital accessibility requirements of WCAG 2.2. This proposal is to approve the adoption of the new 'Rushden and Wallington IT & Data Protection Policy' as presented. - This new policy covers how digital data is handled and stored by the Parish Council and how members of the public can access this data under the FOI Act. It also covers how Parish Councillors should handle data and what they should do in case they think they have been hacked etc. - The new policy was unanimously adopted.	
25/062	KH will circulate updated safeguarding information for inclusion on the website and posting on village notice boards where suitable.	KH
25/063	- There has been a request by a Parishioner to be able to attend PC meetings remotely. - MSGH had previously responded to the Parishioner explaining that this, by law, was only temporarily possible for Parish Councillors to do during the covid lockdown and the law has since been revoked. However, we did believe that remote meetings were an excellent idea and certainly increased public participation. The PC have responded to Government consultation for the law to be changed back to allow remote meetings. - The Parishioner then wrote to our MP, Chris Hinchcliffe, who responded supporting the PC view that despite it being an excellent idea some smaller Parishes such as ours find the technical hurdles and cost issues prohibitively expensive to implement.	

Chair's Signature:

Date:

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes and Action Points

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	- However, there is legislation, currently in the Parliamentary system, to enable remote meetings. The results of the consultation are that the Government states; “We have carefully considered arguments for and against remote attendance and proxy voting, and we plan to legislate to support permanent provision in relation to both policies, when parliamentary time allows. On remote attendance, we plan to permit local authorities to develop their own locally appropriate policies, if they decide to hold remote meetings.” - Given the possibility that Parish Councils may, in the near future, be allowed to hold PC meetings remotely for zero cost, as was done during covid, the PC felt it may not be a good use of limited Parish Council funds to invest significantly in equipment and facilities that may in due course, no longer be needed. - However, the clerks would investigate doing a trial hybrid meeting at our AGM in May to see if using our existing equipment and facilities allowed a suitable meeting to be held with remote attendance by members of the public. - The clerks will reply to the Parishioner explaining what was discussed at this meeting.	Clerks Clerks
25/064	Planning including an update on planning applications being added to the PC Website. - Windmill House, Rushden – replacement of detached garage and workshop has been granted - Solar farms – no further information - Church Farm House, Rushden – replacement of single storey rear extension has been granted. - Youngloves Farmhouse, Rushden – replacement of chimney stack. - SP raised a concern from a member of the public around the Moonshine equestrian application. There was a question about one of the planning conditions not being adhered to so SP pointed the parishioner to the NHDC planning department for clarification. - Wallington Councillors and clerks will meet to discuss NHDC’s response to our letter regarding the sheds / dog kennels at No.11 The Street Wallington.	KH / GL Clerks
25/065	Finance: Spend to 31.12.25 - MSGH presented the accounts to 31st December 2025. At the moment we are forecasting to be £183.77 underspent against our budget, the majority of this underspend; £195, due to less Rushden grass cutting than forecast. - The main risks to this underspend are that we have Wallington Common insurance and the dog bin emptying invoices yet to be received. - KH raised the point that there may yet be a tree inspection invoice to come but that this was proving quite difficult to source a contractor for. MH reiterated that any underspend on trees would be carried over into the reserves for future use. Budget 2026-27	

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	- A precept request of £4,500 is still anticipated although the contingency level since the last budget proposal in September has reduced by almost £90 due to ; a) The inclusion of £51 of bank charges that Lloyds have recently introduced. As interest rates are reducing, we cannot guarantee that the interest we receive on our reserves will continue to cover the monthly bank charges of £4.25 per month so we need to start budgeting for those ongoing bank charges. b) HAPTC subs have increased over and above inflationary forecasts by £13.54 c) Website support costs have increased this year by £24.48 to cover the inclusion of our .Gov.uk email addresses and .Gov.uk website. - Although the contingency has now reduced to only 2.7% of our budget at £119.06 it was felt that given our current level of reserves this is still an acceptable risk. - The precept of £4,500 was agreed unanimously and MSGH will submit that request by the precept deadline of 29.1.26. - SP raised a question from Rushden residents about whether an additional 3rd dog bin could be purchased for the area around Southern Green. Steve Jarvis and Tracy Westgate advised us to apply for a community grant from the NHDC website. SP agreed to canvass opinion on whether a dog bin is needed and where it should be located on Southern Green. He will then submit an application for a grant in due course.	MSGH SP
25/066	Confirm date of next meeting and any items to be included on that agenda. There was some confusion around whether Thursday 7th May was available for the AGM as Wallington VH has been booked by NHDC for the elections but Steve Jarvis believes there are no elections in North Herts due in May. The Clerks will investigate and clarify whether the 7th May is available or not. If it is not available then the fallback date will be Tuesday 5th May. - Tuesday 14th April 2026 - Wallington Parish Assembly (Wallington VH) - Wednesday 15th April 2026 - Rushden Parish Assembly (Rushden VH) <i>Thursday 7th May 2026 - Parish Council AGM and PC Meeting (Wallington VH) - TBC</i> - Thursday 17th September 2026 - Parish Council Meeting (Rushden VH) Thursday 21st January 2027 – Parish Council Meeting (Wallington VH) Tuesday 13th April 2027 – Wallington Parish Assembly (Wallington VH) Wednesday 14th April 2027 – Rushden Parish Assembly (Rushden VH) Thursday 13th May 2027 – Parish Council AGM and PC Meeting (Wallington VH)	Clerks
	The Chair closed the meeting at 9.20pm	

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Date:

2026-27 Budget - FINAL 2%

	Total (Incl. Inflation)	April	Invoiced Spend To Date	Anticipated Spend to Come	Full Year Forecast	Full Year Forecast Vs Budgeted Good / (Bad)	Comments
Bank Charges	(£51.00)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£46.75)	(£51.00)		New Fee introduced in 2025 - £4.25 p/m
Grass Cutting	(£1,235.00)	(£130.00)	(£130.00)	(£1,105.00)	(£1,235.00)		Based on PYR and assumes no inflation in 2026-27 as Greg has not increased prices for a number of years
HAPTC Membership	(£295.33)	(£295.33)	(£295.33)		(£295.33)		Actual Fees to be paid in 2026-27
PC Insurance	(£218.28)	(£214.00)	(£214.00)		(£214.00)	£4.28	Based on PYR & Assumes 2% inflation in 2026-27
Wallington Tree maintenance - Inspections & Reports	(£714.00)			(£714.00)	(£714.00)		Updated report required in 2025-26
Information Commissioner	(£47.00)			(£47.00)	(£47.00)		Based on PYR & Assumes no inflation in 2026-27
Website Hosting costs including website and email support	(£85.67)			(£85.67)	(£85.67)		Higher than PYR as PYR had one-off 3 year Domain Renewal @ £25.16 (runs to 2027) and we have the additional cost of the .gov.uk domain name @ £24 per annum instead of £8.39 pa
Wallington Insurance	(£234.86)			(£234.86)	(£234.86)		Based on PYR & Assumes 2% inflation in 2026-27
Staff Costs	(£600.00)			(£600.00)	(£600.00)		£600 PA salary
Dog Bin Emptying	(£361.32)			(£361.32)	(£361.32)		Based on PYR & Assumes 2% inflation in 2026-27
Rushden Insurance	(£318.48)			(£318.48)	(£318.48)		Based on PYR & Assumes 5% inflation in 2026-27 for 2024-25 and 2% for 2025-26
Printing & Stationery	(£100.00)			(£100.00)	(£100.00)		Based on PYR (with no one-off costs)
Village Hall Hire	(£120.00)			(£120.00)	(£120.00)		Based on 8 Meetings a year @ £15 each (3 PC & 2 PA & 3 EGM Planning)
Election Fee							New Fee introduced in 2023 - Flat Fee of £250 for 5 seats in an election year
Sub-Total	(£4,380.94)	(£643.58)	(£643.58)	(£3,733.08)	(£4,376.66)	£4.28	Sub-total of regular expenditure
Available for one-off expenses	(£119.06)			(£119.06)	(£119.06)		Contingency (2.65%) of total budget
Total Precept Required 2026-27	(£4,500.00)	(£643.58)	(£643.58)	(£3,852.14)	(£4,495.72)	£4.28	
Prior Year Precept 2025-26	(£4,500.00) Check £4,500.00	£2,250.00	£2,250.00	£2,250.00	£4,500.00		No increase in precept required