

RUSHDEN PARISH VILLAGE ASSEMBLY
Minutes and Action Points

Date / Time: Wednesday 15th April 2026, 8.00pm

Location: Rushden Village Hall

Councillors Present: Sue Lewis, Jenny Barlow

In attendance: Mark Hopley (MSGH), Michelle Hopley (MH) - Clerks, Steve Jarvis (SJ - District and County Councillor), Tracy Westgate (TW - Community Partnership Officer NHDC) & 6 member of the Parish.

Item	Description	Status / Action
26/01	Jenny Barlow was elected Chair for this meeting.	
26/02	To confirm the Minutes of Rushden Parish Assembly meeting held on 16th April 2025 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.	
26/03	- It was noted that more communication could be done around what each voluntary organisation within the Parish does. For example who sits on each committee such as the village hall, PCC church committee, who are the trustees of Rushden Manor Trust and the Parish Council itself. How these groups finance their activities and how much is required each year to run them. - There is some information on the Parish Council website at www.rushdenandwallington-pc.gov.uk and the village WhatsApp groups have been useful in communicating information and activities but it was felt that more could be done.	
26/04	Report from the Parish Councillors on the years activities - The PC chair alternates between Rushden and Wallington and this year has been Wallington's turn with Kate Heath being the chair over the last 12 months. Rushden) will provide a chair for the upcoming year and Sue Lewis will be nominated. Other members of the Parish Council are Steve Pettyfer, Jenny Barlow (from Rushden) and Graham Lamb and Kate Heath from Wallington. - The Main activity over the last 12 months has been trying to get Bennetts Lane repaired. Works have now been completed to repair the potholes however the surface dressing is not planned until 20th to the 22nd of April 2026 subject to weather. - We have been exploring the possibility of adding a further dog waste bin in the Southern Green area of Rushden. It is noticeable since the rewilding scheme has been introduced the number of dog walkers as increased dramatically meaning that more waste has been found a long footpaths with or without bags. The new bin is proposed to be financed via a grant from North hearts locality budget and would be positioned between Southern Green farm and Bachelors. The Rushden Manor trust has been approached as the Land belongs to them and they have agreed in principle subject to a decision at this meeting.	

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	- A proposal has been made by a resident to add a concrete ramp to the bus shelter at the bottom of Bennetts lane adjacent to the nursery. It is proposed that grant funding will be sought for materials and volunteers to install the ramp anyone who would like to assist please let the Parish Council know. - North hearts District Council and East Herts District Council have changed the waste collection program including additional bins and different collection time-scales. This seems to have worked very well and most residence seem happy with the current arrangements. - The various solar panel applications around the parish still remain to be concluded. There are no further updates on this. - Community drive safe update: this is still an option but we do require a minimum of five volunteers to be trained on the equipment and to offer their time in order to monitor the traffic movements.	
26/05	Report from the District and County Councillor. - Road update – Bennetts Lane is scheduled for surface dressing next week with the Redhill to Mill end road being delayed due to wet weather but has been re-scheduled for June. - Bus shelter update – SJ has been in discussion with the county council about the fact that there should be a ramp up to the bus shelter. SJ reported that it was on a long list of actions for them so no timescale for completion is reported. - Waste Collection update – improvements have been made since the introduction of the new collection cycle although public and bank holidays are still not working perfectly, however communication and reminders via the NHDC App is vastly improved and very helpful to residents. 20mph speed limit – rules have recently changed making it more difficult to get 20mph introduced. There is more demand for 30mph zones which are taking priority over 20mph zones. 2 new Herts Lynx buses will be added to the fleet to make a total of 9. However, the App does not easily help residents in finding buses that they could take if they had flexibility in their journey departure times. SJ to investigate whether the App has the ability to divert buses if they are close by both the location and time required. SP raised the example of a number of residents heading into Royston one evening when the App would only let them book a bus 15 minutes apart from each other and not all on the same bus at the same time. - Hertfordshire Council reorganisation option : 2 councils 3 councils 4 councils A submission was made back in November 2025. The County council proposed 2 councils but North Hertfordshire proposed 4 councils. The 4 council option would mean that in future Rushden and Wallington Parish would move to sit in East Hertfordshire. The result of this consultation will be announced in the summer of 2026 and elections will then take place for shadow councils in May 2027.	SJ

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	- Changes to the A505 at slip end are being investigated following the death of 2 people at the end of 2025. Various options will be proposed to make the whole of the dual carriageway up to Royston safer and Chris Hinchcliffe, MP is also getting involved to help find a quick and cost effective solution. - With regards to the solar farm applications, where there have not been any recent updates, the national energy operator has stated they will not accept any more bids for battery storage until 2035 as National Grid has no more capacity. - SP raised a number of issues around reporting issues to the Council and not getting a satisfactory response as to whether the issues were dealt with or not : - Issues with dead animals on the A507. These were reported but no action appeared to be taken and they appeared to be removed by natural causes. - The 40mph sign heading into Baldock on the A507 which was reported back in February with no action yet taken - Removal of no entry signs on the A505 to stop people turning the wrong way down what is already a very dangerous road. - Drain cover between Mill End Nursery and the Moon and Stars. - SJ to feedback residents frustration	SJ
26/06	Update from the Trustees of Rushden Manor Trust. In terms of work on village greens Trust land over the last year, we have continued carrying out the normal mowing of certain areas and general maintenance of certain areas of the greens. We have been clearing more of the scrub at Southern Green in general, and in particular, that around the recently planted trees. In addition, we have carried out some major clearing of overgrown areas and ditches surrounding the large pond at the edge of Southern Green, which was with the support and help of 2 local residents for which the trustees are grateful. This included improving drainage from the pond into the ditch and surfacing of the track above it. It also included the loan of a digger. This highlights issues relating to the costs of such works that the trustees have over the years borne themselves, in terms of providing their own equipment, e.g. strimmers and mowers, as well the cost of fuel (including, we estimate, some 50 litres of diesel during the year). There are very limited ways to raise funding. Where owners, in the past, have requested formal deeds to confirm existing use of driveways, contributions have been requested and paid. There is no such income pending. Some past donations have been made. The Parish Council already pays for the insurance of the village greens- thank you. We now receive very little or no income each year, and as our funds decrease each year, we need to look carefully at this problem. We have continued to maintain the village greens for the use and pleasure of local residents, although in the Trust deeds the Trustees are not obliged to do this. The Trust Deed only imposes <u>obligations</u> on the trustees to preserve the land as open spaces for recreation. There is a discretion they “may manage or let” the land. There are no specific requirements to	

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	provide care and maintenance. In practice, trustees since the beginning, have cared for the greens, largely working personally or with the occasional help of volunteers. This is in contrast to a number of residents in recent years having assumed we took money for such things from trust funds, and even for our time- the trustees take nothing personally for their time from the trust funds. Those funds are used for major events such as fallen trees for contractors where we have not been able to do this ourselves. When this happens, we advertise that the logs are available for residents to take. The trust reserves were substantially depleted when objections about the presence of great crested newts were made in response to plans to clear/re-open parts of Southern Green. An ecological survey was needed and an ecological Clerk of Works employed for the clearance. No newts were there. We are of course happy to provide any more information which may be of value to the meeting. Brian Littlechild and Chip Gutteridge Trustees of Rushden Manor Trust A further discussion needs to be had on how the trust is to be funded in the future. The trustees will forward a summary of this after the meeting for the Parish Council to review and discuss at a future meeting.	BL / CG
26/07	Solar Farm – no further update.	
26/08	Drainage issues have been now resolved especially along Treacle lane and the upcoming repairs to the Redhill section of road should resolve the issues there.	
26/09	Potholes and roads are due to be repaired between 20 th and 22 nd April.	
26/10	Community speed watch through Mill End still requires a minimum of 5 volunteers. There was a resident of Mill End present at the meeting who agreed to enquire of their neighbours as to their willingness to get trained and volunteer their time.	
26/11	- The Baldock expansion will be communicated as and when planning updates come through. Updated information is circulated via the village WhatsApp groups and is updated on the Parish Council website at www.rushdenandwallington-pc.gov.uk - It is believed that the first activity will be the housing development between Royston Road, Clothall Common and the A505 bypass.	
26/12	- As Southern Green has become increasingly popular with dog walkers it is felt that a dog waste bin on or around the Green would be beneficial. The cost of a new bin is c£300 and the on-cost of emptying the bin is not thought to be to be great. - SP will investigate whether a grant is available with Tracy Westgate's help.	SP
26/13	Some repairs were carried out by SP & MSGH last summer but these have now degraded to the point that a concrete ramp is now required.	SJ
26/14	Planning applications have generally been non-controversial this year with the only one outstanding being the solar farms.	
26/15	Finance:	

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	- MSGH presented the accounts to the year-end 31st March 2026 - The unaudited accounts show an underspend to the budget of £1,538 which is explained by a number of items that are likely to occur in 2026 rather than 2025 such as the tree inspection report (c£714) and the dog bin emptying invoice from NHDC (c£328) which has not yet been received by us. The other savings of c£500 are from various smaller savings from grass cutting, print & stationery and village hall hire. - Overall a good result and justified us setting a lower precept demand budget of £4,500 last year, thereby lowering residents council tax bills. - We have kept our precept demand request at £4,500 for the coming year (2026-27) confident that we can keep to this level of spend and again not adding to any council tax bill increases.	
26/016	Matters Raised by residents: Further discussion was held about how to deal with the trees within the village and who was responsible for their upkeep. MSGH had brought this issue to the attention of the Trustees of Rushden Manor Trust with regards to their insurance cover. MSGH made the point that a formal tree report would be useful evidence should an insurance issue arise but that this did not need to be carried out by expensive tree surgeons. However, the wider issue of tree maintenance on common land is an issue for further discussion.	ALL
	Confirm date of next meeting and any items to be included on that agenda. Next PC Meeting due on 7th May 2026.	
	The Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm	

PARISH COUNCIL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY
Minutes and Action Points

Date / Time: 16th April 2025, 8.00pm

Location: Rushden Village Hall

Councillors Present: Jenny Barlow (JB) – Chair, Steve Pettyfer (SP), Sue Lewis (SL)

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

Item	Description	Status / Action
1	To confirm the Minutes of Rushden Parish Assembly meeting held on 17th April 2024 - 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. - Item to be carried forward was the suggestion by Karen Pettyfer that a village flyer be produced that reminded residents what organisations such as the Rushden Manor Trust, the Village Hall Committee, the Church PCC committee and even the Parish Council, do for their local community. It should also explain how these organisations are funded and what is required each year to keep them viable. This should also be posted to the website for information. - MH will organize the same for Wallington and add these to the Parish Council website for information. - The speed camera has been moved in Mill End and is probably due to be moved again fairly shortly. - Residents in Mill End need to come forward as volunteers if they would like to set up a speed watch in Mill End. - A successful Village cleanup was carried out in 2024. - Some progress was made by following up with the pond charities about what could or could not be achieved.	KP MH
2	Report from the Parish Councillors on the years activities - 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 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,	

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	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. - 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 have to 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 has to focus on areas with larger development opportunities and will not be able to include Wallington after all.	
3	Report from the District and County Councillor. - Steve Jarvis gave an update on the pothole situation and the process for getting the repairs done and timelines (see discussion below). - SJ gave an update on the proposal to convert to a unitary authority. - SJ got the Council’s flood risk management people to visit Mill End to address the issue of the flooding that occurs, as it did last Autumn (2024). - SJ stated that they then need to engage with the Environment Agency to address issues with the river and culverts causing flooding. - SP thanked SJ for getting the water cleared in the emergency but pointed out that the culverts in Redhill are great, but they are just built 6 inches too high above the road.	

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	- 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. - 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. - SJ did reiterate that there were no proposed changes to arrangements for parish councils.	
4	- SP's pothole walk and talk meeting with Ringway and the Council proved unfruitful and was very disappointing in that it achieved very little action. - All residents will need to continue to report all potholes in order to get them actioned. This can be done online by following the link below https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-street-light-or-pothole.aspx - Steve Jarvis' understanding is that the preparation for surface dressing will take place in the Summer of 2025 and then the tar and chippings are planned to be done in the next council financial year ie sometime between April 2026 and March 2027.	
5	There was a report from the Rushden Manor Trustees that the Chair read out at the meeting. The report is attached to these minutes below.	
6	- Parish Councilors reported back on the Cumberlow Green Lightrock Solar Farm presentation that was held in Rushden Village Hall recently and reflected 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. - 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.	
7	- It was noted that the Luton Airport expansion programme had been approved. - 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.	
8	Finance: - MSGH presented the accounts to the year-end 31st March 2025. - 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)	
9	Confirm date of next meeting and any items to be included on that agenda. Next PC Meeting due on 15th May 2025	
	The Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm	

Report from Rushden Manor for Parish Assembly 2025

Thank you for the information which had been passed on to you from the Parish Council about the possibility of applying for grants for ponds.

Can we just reiterate please as we stated at the last Council meeting, that the ponds are not part of the Trust's land, and we do not have responsibility for them.

In addition, there had been some thoughts a while ago about doing something with the ponds, but we could not organise this through the Trust, because our insurance would not cover work on the ponds as they are not our land.

Just in terms of general interest, in looking at the criteria for applying for a grant which you sent through, I am not sure if any application could meet the criteria; so for example in terms of the depth of the pond which is required, there are periods when the pond is not really a pond, and dries up completely, so I'm not sure if any application was ever made whether this could be a problem? With the very welcome support of local residents.

We would however be happy to consider any proposals for access to the ponds if any other group of people wished to look at carrying out work on the ponds to improve them from environmental perspectives.

We continue to take our responsibilities seriously about maintaining the greens for the use and pleasure of local residents.

In terms of work on Trust land over the last year, we have carried out some fairly major clearing of overgrown areas on the green by the village hall with the support and help of a number of local residents, for which the trustees are very grateful. We have also been clearing some of the scrub at Southern Green. There has also been a good deal of work carried out at Shaw Green.

We are of course happy to provide any more information which may be of value to the Council.

Brian and Chip

16/4/25

PARISH COUNCIL VILLAGE ASSEMBLY
Minutes and Action Points

Date / Time: 16th April 2025, 8.00pm

Location: Rushden Village Hall

Councillors Present: Jenny Barlow (JB) – Chair, Steve Pettyfer (SP), Sue Lewis (SL)

In attendance: Mark SG Hopley (MSGH) - Clerk, Steve Jarvis (District and County Councillor) &
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Brian and Chip

16/4/25

From: stephenpettyfer@rushdenwallington-pc.gov.uk

Subject: report for parish assembly 2026

Date: 15 April 2026 at 17:29

To: Parish Council Clerk clerk@rushdenwallington-pc.gov.uk, Jenny Barlow jennybarlow@rushdenwallington-pc.gov.uk, Sue Lewis suelewis@rushdenwallington-pc.gov.uk

SP

Report from Parish Councillor's on the years activities.

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Community drive safe update: this is still an option but we do require a mi. Of five volunteers to be trained on the equipment and to offer their time in order to monitor the Traffic movements.

Steve Pettyfer

Sent via BT Email App

Report from Rushden Manor for Parish Assembly 2026

In terms of work on village greens Trust land over the last year, we have continued carrying out the normal mowing of certain areas and general maintenance of certain areas of the greens. We have been clearing more of the scrub at Southern Green in general, and in particular, that around the recently planted trees. In addition, we have carried out some major clearing of overgrown areas and ditches surrounding the large pond at the edge of Southern Green, which was with the support and help of 2 local residents for which the trustees are grateful. This included improving drainage from the pond into the ditch and surfacing of the track above it. It also included the loan of a digger. This highlights issues relating to the costs of such works that the trustees have over the years borne themselves, in terms of providing their own equipment, e.g. strimmers and mowers, as well the cost of fuel (including, we estimate, some 50 litres of diesel during the year).

There are very limited ways to raise funding. Where owners, in the past, have requested formal deeds to confirm existing use of driveways, contributions have been requested and paid. There is no such income pending. Some past donations have been made. The Parish Council already pays for the insurance of the village greens- thank you. We now receive very little or no income each year, and as our funds decrease each year, we need to look carefully at this problem.

We have continued to maintain the village greens for the use and pleasure of local residents, although in the Trust deeds the Trustees are not obliged to do this. The Trust Deed only imposes obligations on the trustees to preserve the land as open spaces for recreation. There is a discretion they “may manage or let” the land. There are no specific requirements to provide care and maintenance. In practice, trustees since the beginning, have cared for the greens, largely working personally or with the occasional help of volunteers.

This is in contrast to a number of residents in recent years having assumed we took money for such things from trust funds, and even for our time- the trustees take nothing personally for their time from the trust funds. Those funds are used for major events such as fallen trees for contractors where we have not been able to do this ourselves. When this happens, we advertise that the logs are available for residents to take.

The trust reserves were substantially depleted when objections about the presence of great crested newts were made in response to plans to clear/re-open parts of Southern Green. An ecological survey was needed and an ecological Clerk of Works employed for the clearance. No newts were there.

We are of course happy to provide any more information which may be of value to the meeting.

Brian and Chip, trustees

15/4/26

To Parish Council Clerks
cc. Steve Jarvis

The Greens of Rushen.

When preparing our annual report for the Parish Assembly, we considered more generally, our position “in charge” as trustees. The legalities of trusteeship always mean that work is done for the benefit of others. That has been a burden and is becoming more so.

Consequently, we are writing to the Parish Council to ask it to take a transfer of the Rushden village greens from ourselves as the current trustees. The reasons are detailed below.

A brief recap: Southern Green, Church Green and Shaw Green are currently owned as private registered land but subject to a Trust Deed dating from 1931 (attached). The land is to be preserved as open space for the recreation of the inhabitants of Rushden. That cannot change. There is no power to sell any part.

This request is different from a procedure notified to the Parish Council in the past. The Trust Deed specified that, if a Parish Council was later appointed for Rushden, upon a change of trustees, then an invitation must first be made to appoint a member of the Parish Council. If no member accepts, then a new resident trustee may be appointed. That procedure is cumbersome. A PC member accepting trusteeship would remain as trustee, even if ceasing to be a councillor. There has to be a change of owners at the Land Registry (at a cost) each time trustees change.

Quite separately, there is power to gift land to the Parish Council itself, pursuant to Section 3 of the Open Spaces Act 1906:

3 Transfer to local authority of spaces held by trustees for purposes of public recreation.

*(1) Where any land is held by trustees (not being trustees elected or appointed under any local or private Act of Parliament) upon trust for the purposes of public recreation, the trustees may, in pursuance of a special resolution, transfer the land to any local authority by a free gift absolutely or for a limited term, and, if the local authority accept the gift, they shall hold the land on the trusts and subject to the conditions on and subject to which the trustees held the same, **or on such other trusts and subject to such other conditions (so that the land be appropriated to the purposes of public recreation) as may be agreed on between the trustees and the local authority with the approval of the Charity Commission.***

(2) Subject to the obligation of the land so transferred being used for the purposes of public recreation, the local authority may hold the land as and for the purposes of an open space under this Act.

Note (red script): It is not envisaged that there would be any need to change the existing trust obligations. Because trust income has always been below £5,000.00, there is no requirement to register with the Charity Commission.

In practice, the restriction of benefit to local residents has not been policed.

The Trust Deed only imposes obligations on the trustees to preserve the land as open spaces for recreation. There is a discretion they “may manage or let” for the main trust purposes but in strict compliance with the Deed, the trustees could simply leave the land open and allow recreation. There are no specific requirements to provide care and maintenance. In practice, trustees since the beginning, have cared for the greens, largely working personally or with the help of volunteers.

However, with the passage of time, managing the trust with individuals as trustees is a burden. Two individuals now have full responsibility for managing and trying to maintain a community asset, which may have been appropriate almost 100 years ago but not so in the present day.

The trust has no income. Capital reserves are £ in round figures, although conveyancing fees will be paid out if this proposal is accepted. Outgoings have mainly been for tree maintenance, except the reserves were substantially depleted when objections about the presence of Great Crested Newts, were made in response to plans to clear/re-open parts of Southern Green. An ecological survey was needed and an ecological Clerk of Works employed for the clearance. No newts were in the area.

There are limited ways to raise funding. Where owners, in the past, have requested formal deeds to confirm existing use of driveways, contributions have been requested and paid. There is no such income pending.

Some past donations have been made. The Parish Council already pays for the insurance of the village greens.

The village greens at Cottered are owned by the Parish Council. Here is a note of the history from the internet:

Cottered Village and civil parish is in East Hertfordshire and situated to the west of Buntingford. Throcking is a village and a former civil parish that was, on the 1st April 1955, merged into Cottered. Through the centre of Cottered are very attractive wide village greens that enhance the many thatched and period properties that adjoin them. In 1931 much of this land was gifted to the parish under the Recreation Ground Act 1859 and is under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Ground Trust (known as Cottered Parish Trust) with the serving Parish Council being the sole trustee. Some of the land falls outside of this Deed of Gift and is registered separately as Village Green or Common Land with the Parish Council having the responsibility for its protection and maintenance.

Ardeley Parish Council bought the “Commons of the Parish” in 1967 or so. This mostly comprised Moor Green.

Ashwell Parish Council is the sole trustee of the Recreation Ground Charity.

Aspenden Parish council is the owner of the central village green.

Barley Parish Council manages the Plaistow Childrens’ Playground and green areas, plus Town House.

Hinxworth Parish Council manages and controls the Recreation Ground and Allotments.

Reed Parish Council has responsibility for maintenance of the Childrens' Playground and Village Green.

We have not been able to find as much detailed historical material as we have for Cottered, for the other councils.

Rushden and Wallington Parish Council, in 2015, acquired a 25 lease of open land at The Junction of The Street and Kit's Lane.

There would therefore be parity with a number of the North Herts. neighbouring councils and action, not only comparable with the previous acquisition in Wallington, but with our proposed gift being in perpetuity.

There will be no detriment to the recreation rights of existing residents because the provisions of the trust will continue. There may be an additional burden for some maintenance, although the existing trustees and others are happy to work voluntarily at organised parties, as happens with Village Hall and Church.

The capital reserves would pass to the Parish Council and it has the choice to increase its Council Tax precept for expenditure.

We have had a look at information of the precepts charged by other Parish Councils in North Herts. An extract from its published information is attached. It uses Band D for comparisons. Broadly comparable parishes are as follows:

RWPC	£20.92 (the lowest of this selection)
Sandon	£34.34
Kelshall	£35.61
Therfield	£37.38
Reed	£51.54
Bygrave	£71.95
Caldecote/Newnham	£42.08
Hinxworth	£68.75

This proposal will make the oversight of the greens more democratic. There have been disputes in the past over maintenance issues and people have involved the Parish Council, thinking it had some power of management, when it currently does not. If the Parish Council takes ownership, then there will be a single continuing entity for community interest, information and enquiries in future. The cost will properly fall on all of those who have the benefit.

Ownership by the Parish Council also opens up the possibility of it making bye-laws to regulate any nuisance(s).

In conclusion, it is simply incongruous in the 21st Century that private trustees have the burden of trying to provide and keep up, a village asset without backing. It is not a situation which can continue and we look forward to a positive response.

Variance to 2025-26 Budget

	Total Budget (Incl. Inflation)	Actual Full Year Spend	Variance Good / (Bad)	Comments
Grass Cutting	£1,235.00	£1,040.00	£195.00	Less Grass Cuts over the dry Summer in 2025
HAPTC Membership	£276.26	£276.26		
PC Insurance	£218.28	£214.00	£4.28	
Tree maintenance	£714.00		£714.00	No Wallington Tree work done on 2025-26 but will be carried out in 2026-27
Information Commissioner	£35.00	£47.00	(£12.00)	Unexpected 34% increase in charge in 2025-26
Website Hosting costs including website and email support	£117.45	£131.99	(£14.54)	Additional cost of adopting the .Gov.UK web presence
Wallington Insurance	£241.28	£230.25	£11.03	
Staff Costs	£600.00	£600.00		
Dog Bin Emptying	£328.38		£328.38	Invoice has not been received by the year end.
Rushden Insurance	£312.24	£290.70	£21.54	
Printing & Stationery	£100.00	£41.27	£58.73	Less expenditure on P&S as utilising as much digital communication as possible
Village Hall Hire	£150.00	£90.00	£60.00	Less planning meetings than forecast.
Tree inspection and report				
Election Fee				
Sub-Total	£4,327.89	£2,961.47	£1,366.42	Sub-total of regular expenditure
Available for one-off expenses	£172.11		£172.11	The contingency was not required in 2025-26
Total Precept Required 2023-24	£4,500.00	£2,961.47	£1,538.53	Under budget for 2025-26
Prior Year Precept 2024-25	£4,850.00			

2026-27 Budget - DRAFT

2026-27 Inflation Assumption 2%

	PYR Income / (Expenditure)	Actual or Estimate			Total (Excl. Inflation)	Inflation %	Inflation £	Total (Incl. Inflation)	SPEND BY PERIOD							ANTICIPATED SPEND TO COME		
			Rushden	Wallington					April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Bank Charges	(£51.00)	A	(£34.00)	(£17.00)	(£51.00)			(£51.00)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)	(£4.25)
Grass Cutting	(£1,235.00)	E	(£1,235.00)		(£1,235.00)			(£1,235.00)	(£130.00)	(£195.00)	(£130.00)	(£130.00)		(£260.00)	(£130.00)	(£130.00)		
HAPTC Membership	(£276.26)	A	(£184.17)	(£92.09)	(£276.26)	6.9%	(£19.07)	(£295.33)	(£295.33)									
PC Insurance	(£214.00)	A	(£142.67)	(£71.33)	(£214.00)	2.0%	(£4.28)	(£218.28)		(£218.28)								
Wallington Tree maintenance - Inspections & Reports	(£700.00)	E		(£700.00)	(£700.00)	2.0%	(£14.00)	(£714.00)						(£714.00)				
Information Commissioner	(£47.00)	A	(£31.33)	(£15.67)	(£47.00)			(£47.00)						(£47.00)				
Website Hosting costs including website and email support	(£83.99)	E	(£55.99)	(£28.00)	(£83.99)	2.0%	(£1.68)	(£85.67)							(£85.67)			
Wallington Insurance	(£230.25)	A		(£230.25)	(£230.25)	2.0%	(£4.61)	(£234.86)							(£234.86)			
Staff Costs	(£600.00)	E	(£400.00)	(£200.00)	(£600.00)			(£600.00)								(£600.00)		
Dog Bin Emptying	(£354.24)	E	(£236.16)	(£118.08)	(£354.24)	2.0%	(£7.08)	(£361.32)										(£361.32)
Rushden Insurance	(£312.24)	E	(£312.24)		(£312.24)	2.0%	(£6.24)	(£318.48)										
Printing & Stationery	(£100.00)	E	(£66.67)	(£33.33)	(£100.00)			(£100.00)										
Village Hall Hire	(£120.00)	A	(£60.00)	(£60.00)	(£120.00)			(£120.00)										
Election Fee																		
Sub-Total	(£4,323.98)		(£2,758.23)	(£1,565.75)	(£4,323.98)	1.3%	(£56.96)	(£4,380.94)	(£429.58)	(£417.53)	(£134.25)	(£134.25)	(£4.25)	(£1,025.25)	(£454.78)	(£734.25)	(£4.25)	(£365.57)
Available for one-off expenses			(£79.37)	(£39.69)	(£119.06)			(£119.06)										
Total Precept Required 2026-27	(£4,323.98)		(£2,837.61)	(£1,605.43)	(£4,443.04)	1.3%	(£56.96)	(£4,500.00)	(£429.58)	(£417.53)	(£134.25)	(£134.25)	(£4.25)	(£1,025.25)	(£454.78)	(£734.25)	(£4.25)	(£365.57)
			63.9%	36.1%	OK		(£56.96)	(£4,500.00)										
					Check		Check	Check										
Prior Year Precept 2025-26	£4,500.00	A	£3,000.00	£1,500.00	£4,500.00			£4,500.00	£2,250.00					£2,250.00				
			66.7%	33.3%														

Explanation of Budget Methodology

This budget has been drafted using the "Incremental Budget" method - i.e. starting with historical figures from the latest invoiced costs

2% inflation has been applied to all general costs unless renewal costs are already known at the time the draft budget is produced.

Unforeseen one-off expenditure or grants by the PC to external organisations could exceed the budget in 2025/26 and dip into reserves, in accordance with the financial regulations.

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2026-27 Budget - DRAF

	February	March	Invoiced Spend To Date	Anticipated Spend to Come	Full Year Forecast	Full Year Forecast Vs Budgeted Good / (Bad)	Comments	Background Information Upon which the 2024-25 Budget was based
Bank Charges	(£4.25)	(£4.25)		(£51.00)	(£51.00)		New Fee introduced in 2025 - £4.25 p/m	New Fee introduced in 2025 - £4.25 p/m
Grass Cutting		(£130.00)		(£1,235.00)	(£1,235.00)		Based on PYR and assumes no inflation in 2026-27 as Greg has not increased prices for a number of years	19 Cuts @£65 = £1,235
HAPTC Membership				(£295.33)	(£295.33)		Actual Fees to be paid in 2026-27	Actual Fees to be paid in 2026-27
PC Insurance				(£218.28)	(£218.28)		Based on PYR & Assumes 2% inflation in 2026-27	Actual 25/26 = £214 (Zurich)
Wallington Tree maintenance - Inspections & Reports				(£714.00)	(£714.00)		Updated report required in 2025-26	Updated report required in 2025-26
Information Commissioner				(£47.00)	(£47.00)		Based on PYR & Assumes no inflation in 2026-27	Actual 25/26 = £47 (30.9.25) - £5 discount for completing it online Price increased from £35 PYR (34% Increase)
Website Hosting costs including website and email support				(£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	Net Nerd Invoices - 25/26 - Unlimited Hosting = £59.99 3 Year Domain agreement (2025-27) @ £25.16 Vs £24 per annum for .Gov.uk 1 Year Domain name for .gov.uk @ £24
Wallington Insurance				(£234.86)	(£234.86)		Based on PYR & Assumes 2% inflation in 2026-27	Actual 25/26 = £230.25
Staff Costs				(£600.00)	(£600.00)		£600 PA salary	No Pay Rise anticipated
Dog Bin Emptying				(£361.32)	(£361.32)		Based on PYR & Assumes 2% inflation in 2026-27	Based on bill in 24/25 of £337.37 and anticipated invoice in 25/26 (increasing by 5% Inflation by local authorities)
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	Actual 24/25 = £290.7
Printing & Stationery		(£100.00)		(£100.00)	(£100.00)		Based on PYR (with no one-off costs)	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)	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	New Fee introduced in 2023 - Flat Fee of £250 for 5 seats in an election year
Sub-Total	(£4.25)	(£672.73)		(£4,380.94)	(£4,380.94)		Sub-total of regular expenditure	
Available for one-off expenses		(£119.06)		(£119.06)	(£119.06)		Contingency (2.65%) of total budget	Contingency (2.65%) of total budget
Total Precept Required 2026-27	(£4.25)	(£791.79)		(£4,500.00)	(£4,500.00)			
Prior Year Precept 2025-26				£4,500.00	£4,500.00		No increase in precept required	

Explanation of Budget Methodology

flow Positive / (Negative)
This budget has been drafted using *Budgeted annotated Spend*
2% inflation has been applied to all
Unforeseen one-off expenditure or;

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