

Padworth Newsletter

No. 199

February 2026

Free

We are still hoping someone/people will come forward to take over doing the **Newsletter** as next month will be our last. It doesn't have to be how we have been doing it. You may have completely different ideas but we and/or Rob Jones, chairman of the PC, would be very happy to hear them and discuss possibilities. Perhaps an online only version?

Padworth PC is still seeking ideas on how to spend **CIL money on specific projects**. Any bright ideas? - see page 2. .

West Berks Council are inviting residents' views on their draft **Planning Enforcement Plan** – see p7 – with a deadline of **March 9**.

Mary & Sheila

Deadline for next issue: 25 February 2026

Dates for your DIARY

- **Monday 2 February** Beenham PC (p9)
- **Wednesday 4 February** Ladies at Lunch (p5)
- **Saturday 7 February** Jumble Sale (p3)
- **Tuesday 10 February** Aldermaston PC (p6)
- **Tuesday 17 February** Shrove Tuesday Meal (p10)
- **20/21 & 26-28 February** Aldermaston Players (p8)

- **Saturday 7 March** Jumble Sale (p3); Belle Canto concert (p4)
- **Sat 14 & Sun 15 March** Celebrate **Mother's Day** at the Tea Rooms – see below
- **Saturday 28 February** Cantemus concert (p4)
- **Monday 9 March** Padworth PC (p2)



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service & Andy's Man Club

We're pleased to share that we are now hosting **Andy's Man Club** for weekly talking groups at **Theale Community Fire Station**.

ANDYS MAN CLUB is a peer-led charity that aims to prevent other families from going through the heartache and grief caused by suicide, by encouraging men to speak openly about their issues.

The weekly sessions – for **MEN ONLY** - will take place on

- **Mondays from 7-9pm**

at the fire station, which is located on Wigmore Lane in Theale – by the roundabout

It's **FREE** to attend and you don't need to register in advance.

For more information, please visit: <https://ow.ly/wFu150Y01kl>



Tea Rooms Aldermaston Wharf



Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday **9.30am – 4pm**



Mother's Day Special Afternoon Tea

Saturday 14th March & Sunday 15th March

Served at 11:30am & 1:45pm

Bookings essential. Contact us to make your reservation.

07917 631730

tearoomsaldermaston@gmail.com

Padworth Newsletter is available online at <https://www.padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk/newsletter>

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Padworth Parish Council – Notes of Meeting – 5 January 2026

Village Hall matters

Refurbishment

The Village Hall refurbishment programme includes stripping and resealing the main hall floor, full redecoration of the hall, and improvements to the front lobby toilets. The PC has contributed £10,000 towards this with additional funding secured from the Greenham Trust and other sources. Members noted that kitchen equipment, including the oven and microwave, had been replaced previously, and that future replacement of kitchen cupboards may be considered.

Financial position

It was noted that the Village Hall is now in a significantly improved financial position, no longer employs a caretaker, and is less reliant on ongoing PC support.

Ongoing boundary dispute involving neighbouring land adjacent to the Village Hall

Damage had been caused to the fence and grassed area adjoining the football pitch. Police attended the incident and the individual involved was arrested and released on bail with conditions not to attend the Village Hall. However, an attempt to cause further damage subsequently occurred. Emergency works were required to reinstate the pitch, and the PC approved £900 towards these works.

Members expressed a desire to avoid escalation to legal proceedings, noting that this is a civil matter rather than a police issue. It has been ongoing for several years, and councillors discussed whether arbitration or mediated discussions may be appropriate once bail conditions allow. DC Boeck suggested contacting the Public Protection Partnership to explain the situation and explore whether they may be able to assist.

Planning

Decisions

- 25/02642/CERTP - Siting of a mobile home within the curtilage of June Rose, to be used as an annex for elderly parents of the occupiers of June Rose – **Approved**
- 25/02041/HOUSE – Fairview, Bath Road. Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension and alterations - **Approved**

Awaiting Decisions

- 25/02133/FUL - Exolum PSD, Rectory Road. Installation of a 1.5MW ground mounted solar PV array. The system consists of 2,000 high-efficiency monocrystalline panels arranged in a ground-mount configuration
- 25/00933/FUL - Norbrek, Bath Road. Proposed 4No. terraced houses with ancillary parking and amenity space following demolition of existing bungalow and outbuildings - **PC Objected**

Appeals

- 24/02625/HOUSE - Ground floor extension, new pitched porch, loft conversion, new dormers, internal alterations. Externally red brick to match existing, horizontal timber slats for flat roof dormers, to match existing, and areas of white render - Appeal in Progress

Speeding and Speed Limit Review on A4 Bath Road

The ongoing request for a speed limit review, extending towards the top of Ufton, was discussed. Confirmation of a review date is awaited. Issues included new housing, increased traffic linked to the Greggs development, missing signage, reduced road width, lack of safe crossings for school bus users, and the existing 50mph limit.

It was noted that WBC's approach is data-driven, with speed and traffic volume surveys informing recommendations. Gareth Dowding is the relevant contact. DC will report back.

Traveller site opposite AWE

A stop notice has been served regarding the unauthorised traveller site opposite AWE but remains under review. An entrance has been formed directly onto the road. Members noted this may be a prolonged issue and updates will be shared as they arise.

Church works

Cllr Miller reported that works at the church have now been completed. He suggested exploring whether regular maintenance could be incorporated into existing grass-cutting contracts. Members agreed this could be discussed once indicative costs are known and noted that contributions from the church and diocese would be expected.

Footpath at Padworth Park Farm

It was confirmed that the culvert issue had been resolved, with no further PC expenditure required at this time.

Speeding on Padworth lane

Concerns were raised about speeding and increased traffic on Padworth Lane, particularly between Padworth Lane and Rectory Road. It was noted that passing places were tight, there was limited visibility due to bridges, an increase in commercial traffic, and safety concerns relating to nursery children crossing the road. Residents have requested improved signage, clearer and wider passing places, and a review of the national speed limit. Whether this could be included within a wider speed limit review was discussed. DC to explore and report back.

CIL Money

Use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds was discussed. These must be allocated to capital projects. Ideas discussed included additional playground improvements, picnic tables, and other community assets. Further suggestions are welcomed.

Next meeting

- **Monday 9 March** – 7pm in the Village Hall

All residents welcome

Ellie Brewer
Parish Clerk

◆ ◆ Padworth Parish Website ◆ ◆ www.padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

All correspondence should be addressed to the Parish Clerk: clerk@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

JUMBLE SALES



Happy New Year to you all! The December Jumble Sale raised **£582.43** for Padworth Church and the January Jumble Sale raised **£586.31** for Padworth Village Hall. And over the 12 Jumble Sales last year we have raised **£6620.33** for good causes. Thank you to all who have supported us in any way.

The next Jumble Sales in the Village Hall will be on:

- **Saturday 7 February** – at 2pm in aid of St Michael's Hospice, Basingstoke – a very worthwhile cause that brings comfort to so many
- **Saturday 7 March** – at 2pm in aid of St John the Baptist, Padworth

We are always grateful for your unwanted donations which can be brought to the Hall on the morning of the Sale between **9.30am and 11.30am. No furniture please.**

PLEASE DO NOT "DROP OFF" DONATIONS AT THE HALL ON ANY OTHER DAYS. THEY WILL BE BINNED.

Jumble can be collected by ringing Hazel Ewart on 07876 073385 to arrange collection, or can be delivered to me by ringing the above number to arrange a time.

Hazel Ewart

Please check the Padworth Village Hall Facebook page for Jumble Sale updates.

The Village Hall

Website: www.padworthvillagehall.co.uk Bookings: **Jacky Jones: info@padworthvillagehall.co.uk**

Rambles from the Common

The New Year started with a new adventure for the members of the Padworth Common Volunteer Group who relocated for a day to **Decoy Heath**, another nature reserve managed by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT). Sitting half a mile southwest of Padworth Common, Decoy Heath is nestled between Soke Road and Reading Road towards the southern boundary of Aldermaston parish. The site comprises 20 acres of heathland, woodland and shallow pools and is part of a larger site of special scientific interest (SSSI) called "**Decoy Pit, Pools and Woods**". In warmer seasons the Heath itself is one of the best sites in Berkshire to see dragonflies and damselflies, but on a winter's day with a sprinkling of snow underfoot nothing was flying apart from a few red kites and a robin or two.



The Group's location might have been new but the day's task was all too familiar: in the morning we removed short spindly birch and pine saplings from an open area of heather and fed them to a very welcome bonfire. The dark stems of birch stood just proud of the heather but were distinctly unimpressive in appearance; in contrast, the green pines added a touch of colour to the winter landscape but they were difficult to see unless you were almost on top of them, as you might appreciate from the photo. In the afternoon we worked beside a woodland edge, cutting down taller but still spindly birch and a few willows until it was time to down tools and go home. However, I've made a mental note to return to the site towards the end of summer to see the heather in bloom; with the site supporting ling, bell heather and cross-leaved heather, there should be a sea of flowers ranging in colour from pale pink to mellow mauve to deep purple, and hopefully bees will be collecting nectar to make local honey.

The new location was actually not far from my home as the crow flies, so I was faced with a dilemma: should I drive there the long way or walk there the crow way? I chose the latter, to enjoy the views along a footpath running through fields and woods. I wasn't too pleased to see invasive cotoneasters at the start of the path but my spirits were soon lifted by the sight of a large spoil heap outside a badger's sett. Just inside the greater Decoy SSSI I encountered a waterlogged gully with static pools overlying a dramatic orange subsoil, probably rich in iron oxide. A few steps further on I marvelled at a fully grown wild cherry tree even though its fallen limbs and peeling bark were sure signs it was dying; when it finally dies, countless types of fungi and invertebrates will consume and recycle its nutrients. Finally, to reach the nature reserve itself, I walked up a long but

gentle hill with birch woodland on one side and an inquisitive horse on the other, seemingly untroubled by the frost. Going home later I zipped by everything as fast as I could manage, my mind firmly set on a comfy chair in a warm house; it's nice to experience nature and perhaps do a little good, but in all honesty sometimes enough is enough.

Peter Elliott
Padworth Common Volunteer Group

ALDERMASTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The new term is well under way; we started off with our annual **Healthy Living Week**. This involves activities such as everyone walking a mile each lunchtime (8 laps around the school field), discussions around healthy eating and lifestyles and trying out new foods. There will be rich learning experiences to come, exciting community events and much more to look forward to. The school calendar is filling up with trips, visits, and a variety of activities for all children. It is an exciting time to be a pupil in our primary school.

The Autumn term concluded with memorable events including our Year 5 & 6 children (Starlings class) attending the **Christmas Concert** at Douai Abbey, along with pupils from other local schools. It was a wonderful experience for them, and they represented the school so well with their readings and singing. A festive day of **Christmas jumpers and lunch** was much enjoyed and the pigs in blankets were a firm favourite, although the whole meal was delicious. The day ended with a special visitor in a red suit who visited each classroom with personalised gifts for every child, with a little help from our PTA elves who have worked so hard behind

the scenes all year supporting the school. We are so grateful for their ideas, enthusiasm, and fundraising.

Lastly, the new year brings change within the Full **Governing Body**. Mrs Hollis has stepped down from her role as a Parent Governor, and we thank her for her contributions over the past few years. Following the advert for this vacancy Mr Lees has joined us as the new Parent Governor. After 6 years as a Governor and Chair of Governors Mrs Watchorn has decided to step away from the role. She has provided strong support and leadership to the team and has contributed to school life in so many positive ways. I am delighted to step into her shoes as the Chair of Governors, with Mrs Karen Dignan as our Vice Chair. Together with the dedicated support of the whole Governor team we will continue to work closely with the Senior Leadership Team as the school moves forward and new opportunities and challenges come along.

Cathy Jones
Foundation Governor



MUSIC AT ST MARY'S
BELLE CANTO TRIO
takes you from an English Winter to an
ITALIAN SUMMER
with a selection of sunny songs
to get your toes tapping



St Mary's Church, Shinfield RG2 9BY
Saturday 7th February 2026 at Midday
Free Entry - Retiring Collection

@bellecantotrio @stmarysshinfield



CANTEMUS
CHAMBER CHOIR
WITH
EARLEY ST PETER'S SONG SCHOOL
Chamber Choir directed by Mary Westley, accompanied by Ian Westley

CONCERT
SONGS FOR ALL SEASONS

SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY 3-5 PM
Earley St Peter's Church, Church Road, Reading RG6 1EY

featuring
Joanna Forbes-L'Estrange – *A Season to Sing*
(a choral reimagining of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*)

together with much-loved works by Elgar, Mendelssohn,
Rutter, Vaughan Williams and more!

**in aid of ALEXANDER DEVINE CHILDREN'S HOSPICE
and EARLEY ST PETER'S CHURCH**

Admission – suggested donation £12 for adults, £8 for students, under-18s free.
Refreshments will be available during the interval and
Mama Nunn preserves will be on sale in aid of Alexander Devine Children's Hospice.
For tickets or more information contact a member of Cantemus,
or Maggie Nunn on 07946 020500.

Padworth Parochial Charity

Padworth Parochial Charity is a local registered charity offering limited support to residents.

Did you know:



Students who may require assistance with books or related educational needs can approach the Charity for assistance? While funds must be allocated carefully in line with the Charity's remit, they are open to such requests for support.

The Charity owns a **folding wheelchair** available for short-term use by parish residents? If you are interested, contact the Parish Clerk: clerk@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk



'PADWORTH PAST'

This month I would like to start at the very heart of our village, the name **Padworth**. This is derived from the Old English *Padda*, an Anglo-Saxon personal name for a leader who probably settled in the area, and *Worth*, an old term for farm/homestead/enclosure. The Anglo-Saxon period started around 410 AD after the Romans left, and the Germanic tribes of Angles, Saxons and Jutes arrived, and continued up until the Norman Conquest in 1066.

We see fields all around us, but you may not know that many of them have individual names. Some of these date back as far as Anglo-Saxon times and many others came into being during the Enclosures Acts of the 18th/19th centuries when common land was divided into smaller, private fields often known as 'Closes'. This, of course, gave legal rights to those who became owners of these lands. In the very early 19th century many of the fields in Padworth belonged to members of the clergy, in particular along Padworth Lane.

Padworth has many interesting **field names** and I will tell you about some of them.

In the mid-1700s the land that was north-north-west of the River Kennet at Padworth was known as **Padworth Mead**, mead simply being a very old word for meadow.

Late 1900 records show the fields between the railway line and the canal and both sides of what is now known as Padworth Lane being called **Padworth Field**. However, a small section, on which I believe the Village Hall now stands, is listed as '**Poor's Land**'. East of this and just over the canal bridge is **Towney Field**. It is likely that Towney derived from an old-English word 'town', simply meaning a settlement and 'ley' which was a meadow. This then gives rise to **Towney Lock** and **Towney Footbridge**. As you continue up Padworth Lane, between the canal and the river and east of the river is a field entitled **East Mead Beenham Parish** which is interesting in its suggestion.

Ladies at Lunch

Our December Ladies at Lunch raised **£130** which we donated to the Foodbank and our January Ladies at Lunch raised **£116** which we also donated to the Foodbank

Our next lunch will be on

- **Wednesday 4 February** at 12.3pm at Sheila Jay's house

Sheila's address is Midway, Bath Road, Padworth. Please contact her on 0118 971 3367 if you wish to attend.

If you have any questions, please let me know. My email is caroline.givan@gmail.com or 07808 400843

Caroline Givan

PREMIER GARDENS AND FENCING

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Just over the river is the footpath opposite Lodge Farm/Fisherman's Cottage alongside the **Oar Ditch**. **Nutchers Mead** then appears, an old-English name referring to nut gathering or selling. **Long Meadow, Calves Leys, Ducks Nest Meadow** and **Tree Ground** are all self-explanatory. We then come to **Great Titmore** and **Little Titmore** - original owners of this land could well have been associated with horses as 'tyt' meant little and 'mear' meant horse.

The hill in Padworth Lane was once called **Belchers Hill**. Fisherman's Cottage was at one time known as Belchers and **Belcher's Meadow** lies behind it, obviously all connected to a previous owner. **Home Close** is opposite Lodge Farm, flanked by **Little Broad Close** which is exactly as its name suggests, small but long. **Mary Pightle** borders Padworth Lane as you start to go up the hill. This could well have been owned by someone named Mary. A 'pightle' is a small, enclosed piece of land probably associated with a dwelling and possibly having a hedge. We then come across **Dorley Close** and it is likely that this field was named after the deer which roamed on it.

Shootersbrook Lane leads from Old Farm to Ufton Court. This name probably relates to an ancient association with archery practice for use of the longbow (a 'shooter'), running alongside a brook which is a small natural watercourse. **Broad Halfpenny** and **Lower Halfpenny** are shown opposite the old Padworth Primary School. This indicates that they could have been common grounds with a fee charged per head for grazing cattle or sheep.

There are many more I could tell you about, but maybe I will leave them for another time.

Aldermaston Parish Council

Notes of Meeting – 9 December 2025

Planning

- Two new planning applications, both related to already approved developments which we felt no need to comment on.
- We spent some considerable time reviewing the status of 14 applicants still awaiting a decision, including some that have been in the planning process for an inexplicably long time and 3 that will be decided by Planning Committee. APC decided that it will speak at the relevant Committee meetings.
- Over the previous month WBC had **approved** 3 applications: Dixons Cottages, Burnt Pine and The Old Dairy — all are in line with our recommendations.

Enforcement sites

There are over 10 ongoing enforcement sites in our Parish, the newest and most notable being the new **travellers' site on the Reading Road**. A second entrance has been established onto the site and development—including laying hardcore, fencing and introduction of caravans—continues apace despite WBC's Temporary Stop Notices. Nearby residents of Ravenswing report noisy building activity starting early in the morning and the loss of trees that had previously screened their homes from AWE. Not surprisingly, they are angry and concerned and some would like WBC to host a public meeting to provide information and reassurance. APC agreed to raise these issues with WBC and to ask for an update on all ongoing enforcement cases.

The School

New railings on Wasing Lane outside the School are now installed but Councillors noted that they are not long enough to

Notes of Meeting – 13 January 2026

Planning

- A Variation of Condition relating to the replacement **Strawberry Farm bungalow** approved last year. The approved plans are for a modest 2-bed bungalow on the same footprint as the original 1950s bungalow; the new request is for a 4-bed 2-storey house on a significantly enlarged footprint. We understood that Conditions could only be removed or varied if they are no longer relevant or reasonable. The applicant does not appear to provide a justification for the material change and Emergency Planning has objected, so APC agreed to **Object**.
- 26 Maida's way - a ground floor extension - **No Objection**.

Other decisions

- WBC: **Approval** for three discharge of condition applications
- Basingstoke and Deane Council: **Refused** an application for 9-new apartments next to the back entrance to Sainsbury's in Tadley. The refusal was because of the site's location in the DEPZ and was in-line with our recommendation.

The travellers' site on the Reading Road

WBDC took the case to the High Court in December and got an Interim Injunction to prevent any further development or occupation on all land which formed part of the Strawberry Farm estate in 2021. The injunction was to be reviewed on 12 January, but we understand that the judge opted to extend the injunction period until next month to give the travellers time to submit their evidence. This is not unreasonable, but we are concerned that the travellers are saying there are now 20 families resident on site, whereas WBC enforcement stated that

successfully funnel all pedestrians to the correct crossing point. This will be fed back to WBC. We will also comment on the WBC's revised parking scheme for the same location.

Rec Fencing & Maintenance

We have now received quotes for repair and replacement of the Rec fencing from 3 contractors. They all questioned the value of making ad-hoc repairs given the generally poor condition of the old fence, so we decided it would be sensible to opt for replacement. There is one quote that appears to offer best value which we will accept subject to some follow up questions. The work will take place in the spring, giving us time to apply for match funding from The Good Exchange and our Ward Councillor. We also looked at 3 quotes for our ground's maintenance contract. Our existing contractor was the most competitive; we work well with him so are pleased to renew the contract.

Armed Forces Covenant

WBC has asked PCs to join up to its Armed Forces Covenant. APC agrees wholeheartedly with the underlying principles of the Covenant but decided that it would be misleading and meaningless for us to sign because we have no means to deliver on its commitments in the areas of housing, healthcare, and education. We will continue to honour military personnel past and present by supporting community commemoration events.

Precept

A last review of our 2026/27 budget confirmed that APC will keep its precept fixed at £13.5k.

there was only one resident family when the interim injunction came into force.

Parking by the School

Highways have explained why they are proposing no parking on the north side of Wasing Lane opposite the school. The aim is to limit parking to one side of the road to prevent obstruction to through traffic.

Fencing at the Rec

The PC consider the replacement fencing to be a necessity and agreed to give final authorisation for this once a revised quote is received.

Councillor roles & responsibilities

- Cllr Tilsley will take on the PC website alongside our Clerk
- Cllr Smith will take on our Resilience Plan
- Footpaths will be divided by area and allocated to a few Councillors
- We decided against appointing a single Flood Warden; instead we will make sure all relevant emergency information relating to flood risk management is available on our website and all Councillors will be available to help coordinate a response in the event of a flooding emergency.

Next meeting

- **Tuesday 10 February** – 7.30pm in the Parish Hall

All residents welcome to attend.

Sophie Crawford
Chairman

For full information on Parish Council matters, please visit our website at www.aldermaston.co.uk

Down on the Farm – A quiet time and a busy time

It's a quiet time for arable farmers and a busy one for stock keepers.

Back in 2024 I wrote about an Oxfordshire farmer who was growing **hybrid barley**. Last week our son, who has taken over the farm, attended a lecture and visit all about growing **hybrid wheat**. Areas of wheat planted nationally far exceed the barley areas so the influence on the market will be more noticeable because there is much more demand for bread-and biscuit-making and animal food. This breakthrough in technology will create higher yields, greater resistance to disease and reduce the need for herbicides and pesticides. The next few years should show the benefits created by the plant breeders.

With the generally mild weather this winter, south Berkshire has escaped the snow and this has encouraged growth of the cereal crops - wheat, oats and barley - to the extent that they are now more prone to spring diseases. To help combat this, we have re-introduced a practice that used to be encouraged 50 or so years ago. They often say "nothing is new", just forgotten, and so the same ideas are introduced as some new technical breakthrough. The sheep farmer, whose sheep are currently grazing the stubble turnips which were planted after harvest, has been invited to graze the winter wheat that is far too advanced in growth terms. There are some strict guide lines to this practice:

1. Only graze when the soil is reasonably dry to avoid damage to the crop and the ground
2. Do not overgraze to avoid damage to the growing centre of the cereal tillers
3. Do not graze after the end of February as this could reduce the subsequent yields

Sheep prefer wheat to barley and don't find oats very palatable. *Watch this space for results!* We must find someone to replace our retiring editors, Sheila and Mary. Otherwise you will never know how it all works out. They have done a brilliant job producing our Newsletter – **Come on, someone, STEP UP!**

As a consequence of our very hot dry summer, the second cut of **silage** never really happened or was greatly reduced in quality and quantity. More **winter fodder** will therefore be required to see the winter through. Our **fodder beet** fits that requirement and already our stocks are selling fast. One local farmer is taking 2x20 tons loads per week. The beet will be chopped and added to the forage mix for cattle, sheep and even deer.

The 2025 harvest **wheat** that was sold in September and October is now being collected. For your interest, loading 28 tons allowed by the haulier takes 30 minutes.

Wishing all the readers a very Happy and Peaceful 2026.
From Our Agricultural Correspondent

ALDERMASTON COFFEE CLUB

1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month any time from
10.00am – 11.30am



Join us in the café at **Hilliers**

Drop by for a chat, a chance to meet old friends and make new ones

Everyone is welcome – just come along

For further details contact Cynthia Newman
cmnewman2021@outlook.com 0118 9713 525

Planning Enforcement Plan – Public Consultation time!

West Berkshire Council is inviting residents to share their views on the **draft Planning Enforcement Plan** during a six-week public consultation running until **5pm on Monday 9 March**. Feedback received will help shape the final plan, which will be considered by the Executive in May 2026.

Planning enforcement plays a vital role in ensuring development across West Berkshire is carried out in line with planning permissions, helping to protect the character and amenity of our communities.

As the Local Planning Authority, the Council receives an average of 60 new enforcement cases every month. Around half of these are found not to be breaches or not expedient to pursue, making it essential that our approach is fair, clear and focused on the most serious planning harm.

The draft Planning Enforcement Plan (PEP) sets out how the Council will handle complaints, prioritise investigations and

decide when formal action may be taken. It introduces a revised prioritisation system to ensure resources are directed to the most significant breaches, including a new Category 4 for low-priority cases.

This consultation supports the Council's priorities to protect our communities, maintain a strong local environment and ensure transparency in decision-making. By improving how we prioritise enforcement, we aim to build public confidence in the planning system and make sure resources are used effectively.

Residents can view the draft plan and complete the short survey online, or request paper copies at the Council offices in Market Street, Newbury. For more information and to take part, visit <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/draft-planning-enforcement-plan>.

WHATEVER THE WEATHER!



I've not been able to do a lot in the garden this last month, might be something to do with the **weather**. I do so hope we won't have used up all the rain and there will be none left for the summer. I should have kept a gardening diary over the 50 years we've lived here, and made a note of when plants start to flower as I can't remember snowdrops and aconites putting on their display so early in January. Other bulbs are showing green leaves but no flowers yet. I am having to scatter rabbit repellent powder over all the areas where bulbs are growing, not for **rabbits** but those **grey pests** you know I don't like. They have dug up some and eaten them. I had seven pots in which I was growing tulips to have by the front door. They were in the mower shed for safety, but I hadn't noticed a small gap in the roof. But the greys had and three pots had been emptied. I do get an occasional rabbit and they are climbing the fence to get in, something I would not have believed had I not seen it. More repellent on order!!

One thing I have been doing between showers is removing all the leaves from my **hellebores**. If you grow them, now is the time to cut away all the leaves, yes even the healthy ones, leaving just the flower stalks. This is to prevent the spread of fungal diseases like leaf spot.

I'm very pleased to see that so many of my **seed trays** are now showing young seedlings, and even after all these years I still get excited to see them, especially the new varieties. I have mentioned *New World Seeds* from whom I buy unusual ones, and you might like to take a look at *Derry Watkins, Special Plants*, another nursery with seeds you won't find elsewhere.

My **rhodie Christmas Cheer** actually had five flowers open on the day, the first time ever. It now has 24 open with 15 to come, the best ever.

I have had five lady **phessies** and one male for several months now and today there were nine, still a way to go to beat the fourteen we had one year. I do wish though that they showed a little gratitude; they keep scraping off the Strulch straw that I've put on top of my **dahlias** that I leave in the ground. Also, there is a path between a beech hedge and a hornbeam one where grass doesn't like to grow but moss does, so I made a moss path. The phessies like to scratch that up as well, leaving gaps everywhere.

Did you do the **Big Bird Count** at the end of January? Among the species I counted were two **blackcaps**. These birds have always flown south to warmer countries every winter, but a few are now staying because of our milder winters. This is a rare sighting and I'm well chuffed.

Groan Time!

- Have you ever tried blindfold archery? No. You don't know what you are missing
- Just got a new job collecting litter. When I asked about training, they said "You'll pick it up as you go along."
- I got an email explaining how to read maps backwards. It was spam
- When you are born you actually have four kidneys, but as you get older two of them turn into adult knees.

Keep gardening and dry!

Mike Warner

PS: I have a lot of videos that I wish to pass on: films, TV series, Miss Marple, Midsummer Murders, so if you would like them, please get in touch. The Jumble Sale are taking my DVDs but not videos. 0118 970 0391

THE 39 STEPS
ADAPTED BY PATRICK BARLOW
From the script for John Buchan
From the novel by Alfred Hitchcock
Licensed by The British Film Institute Limited
and an original concept by Simon Burton and Robin Swicord
In association with Feroz Khan Limited

Friday 20th February 2026 Dinner/Theatre: £25
Saturday 21st February 2026 Dinner/Theatre: £28

Thursday 25th February 2026 Play Only Night: £12
Friday 27th February 2026 Dinner/Theatre: £28
Saturday 28th February 2026 Dinner/Theatre: £28

Tickets from: boxoffice.aldermastonplayers.co.uk

DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE:
Early Booking before end of January 2026 - £1 off,
Opening Night - £25
Book a Table of 8 - 10% off

Start times: Dinner/Theatre - 7:00pm for 7:30pm meal
Play Only Night - Curtain Up at 7:45pm

Pay for a Raffle - Profits shared between Hall & Players

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Drivers Wanted!

If you cannot get to your medical appointments we, at the Burghfield and Mortimer Volunteer Bureau, give our time and use our own private vehicles to get you to **Hospitals, GP Surgeries, Dentists and Opticians** in our area. We take you to your appointment from your home, wait for you and then return you home.

Have you recently retired? Have a car and enjoy meeting people

Contact us on **0118 983 1814 (Mon-Fri 9:30-11:30am)** or email bureauvolunteer@gmail.com



and chatting? Looking for a way to give some of your time to your community? The Burghfield & Mortimer Volunteer Bureau needs **more drivers** and would welcome **any** of your time (daytime Mon-Fri). An allowance of 50p per mile is available to cover motoring expenses.

Beenham Parish Council

Notes of Meeting - 1 December 2025

Library facilities

The options put forward by WBC were discussed. It was felt that in view of very few parishioners using the previous mobile service, and the two options of a pop-up library or Community Bookshelf being less than ideal, a recommendation should be made to use WBC's own e-book service for a period of time. All feedback from parishioners on the effectiveness of this service would be welcome.

Council Meeting dates for 2026

5 January ♦ 2 February ♦ 2 March ♦ 8 April ♦ 8 Apr (Annual Parish Assembly) ♦ 13 April ♦ 11 May ♦ 1 June ♦ 6 July ♦ 3 August ♦ 7 September ♦ 5 October ♦ 2 November ♦ 7 December

Bus Service - Correction

In November it was reported that the Community Connect service had been extended to go to Royal Berkshire Hospital. This was incorrect. It has been extended to Thatcham Community Hospital and Theale.

Aldermaston Wharf parking

There have been numerous objections to the WBC proposals to alleviate parking problems on Mallards Way.

Planning Matters

25/02119/HOUSE: 27 Mallard Way, Aldermaston Wharf. **Approved.**

School Security

There has been no response from WBC to the PC's request to

Notes of Meeting - 5 January 2026

Public Forum

- The WI reported that during their recent litter picking, they recovered 15 empty 11 bottles of vodka in a small area. Was this evidence of someone with an alcohol problem drink-driving? It was decided that TVP should be notified with a view to them monitoring the area.
- It was noted that another potential affordable house in Beenham had been sold by SVG (Sovereign Housing). The PC responded that they had already written to SVG to raise this contentious issue yet again.

The School

Regarding the vandalism incident at the school, a quote had been received for the installation of a 5-camera day/night surveillance system. It was agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting after a field meeting with the school/PC to see the practical options.

Affordable Housing

The PC is still talking to potential landowners.

Planning Matters

- 25/02742/HOUSE. Woodside, Clay Lane, RG7 5PG. 2-storey side extension and 2 dormers for loft extension. **No objection**; neighbours for comment if necessary.
- 25/02784/HOUSE. Highdown, Webbs Lane, RG7 5LH. 1st floor roof extension to allow for additional bedroom accommodation and balcony. **No objection**; neighbours for comment if necessary.

advise on security matters for schools after the vandalism incident in October.

School car parking bay painting

This matter has been passed to WBC.

Bird Survey

A bird survey was carried out at Field Barn Farm which identified 33 different species of birds. The detailed summary will be put onto the Beenham Online website for parishioners who are interested.

Analogue landline telephone switchover

BT will be switching over from the old analogue landlines to Digital Voice using broadband routers to deliver the phone service by 2027. Some parishioners will have received letters outlining how and when this will be done. Others have not. This was discussed in relation to some issues that some people may have. Not all parishioners have access to internet and broadband services and they should be provided with plug-in boxes to maintain their phone services. However, in the case of power cuts equipment will not work. In which case, BT says that a mobile phone should be used but Beenham is notorious for poor mobile signal coverage. This could be a problem especially in the case of emergency calls and our MP, Olivia Bailey, is aware of these issues. The Digital Poverty Alliance has a good pamphlet for people seeking further information. https://digitalpovertyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Digital-Switchover-Factsheet_Individuals-and-Families.pdf

Planning decisions

- 25/02231/FULMAJ. Land to the east along Pips Way. **Granted**

Litter bins/grass cutting tender

It was agreed to seek tenders for these services to ensure we are getting competitive rates. (Post meeting note: this may also be for the maintenance of the salt bins).

20 mph speed limit through Beenham

WBC has a programme of introducing a 20mph speed limit where appropriate in all villages (after local consultation). This will take several years, and Beenham is in the plan for 2027/2028. The PC is continuing to determine what restrictions parishioners would like and to liaise with WBC.

Financial Matters

- WI: £400 for litter picking. **Approved**
- St Mary's Church: £800 for grass cutting. **Approved.**
- 2026/27 PC precept. It was agreed to increase the precept to £21,320 which is an approximately 10% increase since the last review in 2023.

Next meeting

- **Monday 2 February** - at 7.00pm in the Community Room

All parishioners welcome

Peter Hamblin
Parish Councillor

All correspondence to the PC should be addressed to the Parish Clerk: Lauren West: 07919 916125/clerk@beenham-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council website: www.beenham-pc.gov.uk

Beenham Community Website: <https://www.beenhamonline.org/>

Veolia Household Waste Recycling Centres - Padworth & Newtown

How to book an appointment

- There will be a limited number of appointments available during the day between **9am and 6pm**
- The quickest way to book an appointment is **online** but you can also book by contacting Customer Services on 01635 519080
- When you book your appointment you will need to provide your details and car registration number
- Eligible Hampshire residents with a blue permit are able to book an appointment to use Newtown Road recycling centre
Locations: Newtown Road Recycling Centre and Padworth Recycling Centre.

CHURCH MATTERS



St John the Baptist, Padworth

Parking on left hand side of Padworth College Drive

Sunday 1 February Candlemas	Songs of Praise	6.30pm – preceded by
	Afternoon Tea	5.45pm – All welcome
Sunday 8 February	Eucharist	9am
Sunday 15 February	Evensong	6.30pm
Sunday 22 February	Eucharist	9am

Benefice Shrove Tuesday Supper - 17 February

You are warmly invited to food & fellowship at the Benefice Shrove Tuesday Supper at **7.30 p.m.** at **St John's Church, Mortimer**. There'll be homemade dishes & pancakes will be served followed by tea & coffee. Fruit juice & water will be available but bring your own drinks if you prefer. A basket will be available for donations. If you are able to come, it would help with catering if you would let the Benefice Office know by **Friday 13th February** please. Email admin@mortimerbenefice.co.uk or telephone 01189 333704

St John's, Mortimer

The **Eucharist** is offered daily at 9.15 am & **Night Prayer** each weekday at 9 pm
The **Eucharist** is also each Sunday at 10am via Zoom

Zoom link for services <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Everyone is welcome to join with the clergy and to take part in these services.
Details are also available on the website: www.mortimerbenefice.org.uk

For more information contact the Benefice Office: 0118 933 3704 or email Lorna Jones lornajones48@gmail.com

For Aldermaston and Woolhampton Benefice, go to www.awb.org.uk

LOCAL LIBRARIES

Opening Hours

Burghfield Common – 0118 983 3632

Monday	2-5pm
Wednesday	2-5pm
Thursday	10am-5pm
Friday	2.30-6pm
Saturday	10am-12.30pm

Mortimer – 0118 933 2882

Monday	1-5pm
Tuesday	9.30am-5pm
Friday	1-6pm
Saturday	10am-12.30pm

Pangbourne – 0118 984 4117

Monday	2-5pm
Tuesday	10.30am-6pm
Thursday	9.30am-12pm
Friday	10.30am-5pm
Saturday	10am-12.30pm

Theale – 0118 930 3207

Monday	1-5pm
Wednesday	10.30am-5pm
Thursday	2-6pm
Friday	10.30am-5pm
Saturday	10am-12.30pm

Thatcham – 01635

866049

Monday	9.30am-5pm
Tuesday	9.30am-5pm
Thursday	9.30am-5pm
Friday	9am-5.30pm
Saturday	10am-12.30pm



library@westberks.gov.uk www.westberks.gov.uk/libraries



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Useful Numbers and Contact Information

Aldermaston CE Primary School: Chair of Governors		971 3362	enquiries@aldermaston.w-berks.sch.uk
Aldermaston Parish Councillors:	Cathy Jones	971 2236	scrawford@aldermaston.co.uk
	Sophie Crawford(Ch)	971 2549	dshirt@aldermaston.co.uk
	Dave Shirt	971 4686	afaulkner@aldermaston.co.uk
	Alison Faulkner	07887 522610	adam@aldermaston.co.uk
	Adam Shepherd-Price	971 0142	rsmith@aldermaston.co.uk
	Rob Smith		
	Ed Tilsley		
	Angela Woodley	971 2803	awwodley@aldermaston.co.uk
Aster Communities			
Neighbourhood Officer	Rachael McCarthy	01264 405692	rachael.mccarthy@astercommunities.co.uk
ASB Officer	Sue Barton	01264 405583	sue.barton@astercommunities.co.uk
Beenham Parish Councillors:	Graham Bowsher (Ch)	07557 967575	g.bowsher@beenham-pc.gov.uk
	Graham Bragg	971 3688	g.bragg@beenham-pc.gov.uk
	Alex Cother	07764 637190	a.cother@beenham-pc.gov.uk
	Peter Hamblin	971 2959	p.hamblin@beenham-pc.gov.uk
	David Hancock	07471 148256	d.hancock@beenham-pc.gov.uk
	Peter McEwen	07717 718608	p.mcewen@beenham-pc.gov.uk
	Revd Jane Manley	971 2891	awb.benefice@gmail.com
Benefice Office – Aldermaston		933 3704	admin@mortimerbenefice.co.uk
Benefice Office – Mortimer		971 3136	
Churchwarden – Padworth Church	Elizabeth Porter	0800 80 70 60	(24-hour number)
Environment Agency		07808 400843	caroline.givan@gmail.com
Ladies at Lunch	Caroline Givan	01635 519827	
Mobile Library			
Neighbourhood Watch			
Rectory Road	Mike Warner	970 0391	
The Fallows			
Network Rail			
Network Rail 24 hour Helpline	Gail Evans	01793 777471	gail.evans@networkrail.co.uk
<u>NEWSLETTER</u>		08457 114141	
	Mary Dance	07713 680671	maryedance@hotmail.com
	Sheila Evered	933 1451	sheila_pusinelli@hotmail.com
	Reading Buses	959 4000	www.reading-buses.co.uk
No 3 Bus route			
Padworth Common Advisory Committee:			
Chairman	Mike Warner	970 0391	
Padworth Parish Councillors	Robert Jones (Ch)	07475 744182	robert.jones@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
	Andrew Griffin	07473 803979	andrew.griffin@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
	Jonathan Johnson		jonathan.johnson@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
	John Miller	933 2966	john.miller@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
	Emily Robinson	07769 674460	emily.robinson@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
	Tommy Tucker	971 2180	tom.tucker@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
	Andy Williams		andy.williams@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
Padworth Parochial Charity	Mike Warner	970 0391	
Parish Clerk (Aldermaston)	Abi Lewis		parishclerk@aldermaston.co.uk
Parish Clerk (Beenham)	Lauren West	07919 916125	clerk@beenham-pc.gov.uk
Parish Clerk (Padworth)	Ellie Brewer	07877 122127	clerk@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
Police Neighbourhood Watch	Pangbourne team	101	
Veolia Environmental Service	Daytime	0203 567 2900	west.berkshire@veolia.co.uk
	Out-of-hours	08701 660 309	
Village Hall - Bookings	Jacky Jones	07756 820263	info@padworthvillagehall.co.uk
Village Hall Committee - Chairman	Rob Jones	07475 744182	
Volunteer Bureau		983 1814	
Website manager			
Website			clerk@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
West Berks Council		01635 551111	http://www.padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
Local Councillors			
Aldermaston, Padworth & Beenham	Dominic Boeck	971 0330	dominic.boeck@westberks.gov.uk
Bradfield	Ross MacKinnon		ross.mackinnon1@westberks.gov.uk
Burghfield & Mortimer	Nick Carter		nick.carter2@westberks.gov.uk
	Vicky Poole		Vicky.poole1@westberks.gov.uk
	Geoff Mayes	933 2536	geoffrey.mayes1@westberks.gov.uk
Planning Department		01635 519111	
Highways & Transport			
WBDC Customer Services		01635 519080	
Environmental Health		01635 519192	
Fly Tipping & Waste		01635 519080	
Emergencies (out-of-office hours)		01635 42161	

◆ ◆ Padworth Parish Website ◆ ◆

www.padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

Please send your contributions to: **clerk@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk**



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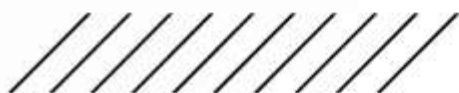
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