

PADWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

C/o Juniper House, Aldermaston, RG7 LJ
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Parish Council Meeting

3rd November 2025, 7pm

Padworth Village Hall

Councillors: Rob Jones (Chair), John Miller, Emily Robinson, Andy Williams, Andrew Griffin, Tom Tucker, Johnathan Johnson

Members of Public: 2

1. To receive apologies

Dominic Boeck (District Councillor)

2. To receive declarations of interest and dispensations

There were none

3. To approve minutes of the last meeting of the council

Minutes were signed and dated for records

4. To receive the District Councillors report

District Cllr Boeck gave apologies for the meeting; his report will be posed to the PC website when received.

5. To receive the Clerks report

PADWORTH PARISH COUNCIL - CLERKS FINANCIAL REPORT

Bank Reconciliation for Meeting 03/11/25

	<u>Payments</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Balance as at 31st August 2025			
Treasurers Account			£ 461.16
Project Account			£ 31,249.78
			<u>£ 31,710.94</u>
Bank Interest received (Sept)		£ 17.37	
Bank Interest received (Oct)		£ 16.98	
Precept		£ 10,000.00	
Payments			
Service Charge	£ 4.25		
Autella	£ 84.00		
Ellie Brewer	£ 406.19		
AKS Farm Contractors	£ 240.00		
Ellie Brewer	£ 406.19		
Service Charge	£ 4.25		
	<u>£ 1,144.88</u>	<u>£ 10,034.35</u>	<u>£ 40,600.41</u>
Treasurers Account			£816.28
Project Account			<u>£ 39,784.13</u>
			<u>£ 40,600.41</u>

Clerk stated that the Precept budget requires revision and must be agreed at the next meeting ahead of the end-of-January deadline. Last year's budget included funding for fencing, and members discussed allocating a contribution this year towards the Village Hall, specifically for toilet improvements and potential floor refurbishment.

6. Village Hall matters

Councillors discussed how the upcoming refurbishment works will be managed to keep the Hall closed for as little time as possible. The Village Hall Committee will review the programme of works at their meeting next week, aiming to minimise disruption; the toilets may require a longer period out of use. It was stated that any bookings that will be effected will have been contacted, it is expected that disruption will be limited.

An update was given that the Parochial charity, which holds £30,000 in funds, is in discussion regarding a £6,000 contribution to support the Village Hall Committee, who currently face a shortfall. The hall's finances have improved significantly due to increased utilisation and rental income which have helped to make it more profitable.

7. To review Planning Matters

7.1 Decisions

- **25/00825/PASOL** - Exolum PSD Padworth Highwood Rectory Road- Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: installation of a 93.28 kWp Solar Photovoltaics array to the existing roofs on two storage warehouses - **NOT REQUIRED**
- **25/00541/HOUSE** - Replacement of a conservatory with a new single storey extension with rooflights. - Old Rectory Farm, Rectory Road, Padworth Common, Reading RG7 4JD - **APPROVED**
- **25/01664/HOUSE** - Flat roof front and side extension to the property in-between the main house and the existing detached garage. 44 Fallows Road, Padworth, Reading, RG7 4GX - **APPROVED**

7.2 Awaiting Decisions

- **25/00933/FUL** - Proposed 4No. terraced houses with ancillary parking and amenity space following demolition of existing bungalow and outbuildings. - Norbrek, Bath Road, Padworth, Reading RG7 5HR - **PC Objected**

8. To receive updates from Councillors

Four Houses Corner

Councillors discussed the site, which was originally intended to operate as a short-term transitional location for stays of only a few days. Concern was raised that approximately £7 million has now been spent on the site, significantly exceeding the original expectations. Questions were raised regarding when individuals may be returning to the area, noting that many had been relocated to Stephens Firs. Clarification was also sought on whether the buildings on site are intended as toilet blocks or residential facilities, and it was noted that 16 families hold rights of residency.

A further update was shared regarding activity near AWE, where fencing and materials have appeared, indicating potential forthcoming works.

AWE Liaison meeting

The next AWE liaison meeting will take place on Wednesday 5th November. Cllr Jones asked whether any councillor might be available to attend in his place. It was noted that construction in the wider AWE area is expected to increase significantly, with the existing hub being small in comparison to the scale of development proposed.

Road Signage and SSE Works

Cllr Robinson reported inadequate information on the upcoming works on Goring Lane, close to the double roundabout at Burghfield Common. Signage has appeared along the main route to Reading in both Grazeley and Mortimer. She noted that the information states SSE works on land adjoining the railway, with a full road closure scheduled for 17th November. Further information on the closure, including phasing, duration and diversion routes, was requested as this is a main route into Reading.

ACTION – Clerk to request full details from West Berkshire Council, including maps and timelines for the closure.

District Councillor Attendance

Councillors discussed the limited attendance of the District Councillor due to a recurring clash with Beenham Parish Council meetings, which are also held on Mondays. Members stressed the importance of his attendance, particularly for updates relating to the Vale of White Horse, and questioned how frequently he is able to join Padworth meetings. The possibility of adjusting meeting dates was also considered.

ACTION – Cllr Jones to ask whether the District Councillor can reschedule his commitments to allow more frequent attendance at Padworth meetings.

Parish Newsletter

Councillors discussed the future of the Parish Newsletter and noted that the Parish Council has always been a strong supporter of it. Despite repeated requests, no volunteer has yet stepped forward to take over its compilation. Concerns were raised about what will happen next, as Mary confirmed that although putting the newsletter together does not take a significant amount of time, she is unable to continue. The final issue is expected to be published in March.

The possibility of the role of collating it becoming a paid position was discussed, it was noted that the PC already contributes approximately £2,000 towards publication costs, members expressed concern that it would be a shame if the publication moved solely online for cost-saving reasons. The newsletter is distributed both in print and electronically currently and it was agreed that the printed element should continue as many parish households may not be connected by email. Councillors suggested highlighting in upcoming issues that these may be the final editions, and discussed options such as stapling a notice to the front to emphasise the need for volunteers.

ACTION – Cllr Jones to contact Sheila to draft a plea for help to be included in the newsletter.

New planning application - 25/02133/FUL

An update was provided on the proposed solar development at Sopers Lane. The address used in the application states to the Old Rectory, though the proposal is not connected to the property owners. A previous application had been refused due to rare snails identified on site, but the latest survey found no such species.

Exolum are submitting the application in response to rising electricity costs (from £6 million to £23 million annually) and aim to increase self-sufficiency. They own three pipeline-related sites: Aldermaston, Sopers Lane and Rectory Road, with two still in operation. Concerns from new residents near Rectory Road regarding odour issues were noted. A question was raised about whether the land could become redundant and sold if permission is refused.

It was confirmed that the panels would not generate glare and would be positioned facing the gully rather than the road or church. Councillors noted no objections and expressed support for the application. The other pipeline sites remain in use and are not being considered for similar developments.

ACTION – Clerk to add comment on planning portal

Padworth Parochial Charity

Padworth Parochial Charity was raised for discussion as it is a local registered charity offering limited support to residents. The Charity is keen to ensure wider awareness, particularly for students who may require assistance with books or related educational needs. While funds must be allocated carefully in line with the charity's remit, they are open to receiving requests for support.

It was noted that the Charity also holds a folding wheelchair which can be made available for short-term use by parish residents. Councillors suggested including a short paragraph in the next parish newsletter, as newer residents may be unaware of the Charity and the help it can provide.

Berkshire Ornithological Club

An update was given regarding the Berkshire Ornithological Club and the gravel pit nature reserve. The Club reported that significant remedial and conservation work is required on the site. It is understood that approximately £400,000 has been allocated for the works. The reserve contains several rare bird and plant species which need to be preserved as part of the planned improvements.

Canal and River Trust own the site, and have confirmed that the necessary conservation work can proceed. The Club requested use of the small room in the Village Hall for meetings related to the project. Councillors agreed that this would be acceptable, subject to the Village Hall calendar being checked in advance.

Local Neighbourhood Watch

A representative from the local Neighbourhood Watch group attended the meeting. They explained that updates are circulated to interested residents via email, including local crime figures, scam alerts and general statistical information. A recent incident involving a stolen farm vehicle was noted, along with updates from neighbouring areas such as Mortimer. Cllr Robinson requested to be added to the distribution list.

Churchyard

It was reported that the churchyard hedge has now been fully cleared. The remaining cut material will be burned by Pete Warner. Councillors noted that the clearance has significantly improved light levels within the churchyard.

Footpath at Padworth Park Farm

An update was provided regarding the previously blocked culvert. The obstruction, which had been causing flooding concerns, has now been fully cleared and the necessary works completed. It was noted that Millbrook experienced some disruption to water and electricity supply during the incident. Councillors also expressed frustration at the difficulty in obtaining timely information, as attempts to seek updates were not responded to satisfactorily.

Defibrillator

Cllr Griffin reported that a new battery is required for the defibrillator located at The Butt Inn, at a cost of approximately £100. As the existing battery is around ten years old, attempts will be made to source a replacement; however, if this is not possible the defibrillator itself may need to be replaced. A query was raised as to whether the unit has ever been deployed in an emergency. Councillors noted that residents appreciate having a defibrillator available nearby.

ACTION – Cllr Griffin to investigate availability of a replacement battery and report back.

9. Speeding Data Collection and Speed Limit Review on A4 Bath Road

A resident from Macs Close attended the meeting to raise concerns regarding speeding on the westbound stretch of the Bath Road adjacent to the Berkshire Ford Centre. The resident explained that their cul-de-sac exits directly onto a national speed limit section, and questioned whether the 60mph limit remains appropriate since the road layout was changed from two lanes to one in recent years.

The recent addition of the Greggs at the garage was discussed as a contributing factor, with slower vehicles turning left causing conflict with fast-moving traffic approaching from behind. The resident expressed concern for the increasing number of young children in the area, particularly with new housing built close to the roadside, and referenced Woolhampton as a comparable location where a 30mph limit is in place.

It was noted that children use the nearby crossings for buses into Theale, and that the bus stop on the opposite side of the road is difficult to access safely. A historic fatality at this location was also mentioned. The resident highlighted a younger demographic now living in the area and offered testimony from neighbours to support the need for a review.

ACTION - Clerk to share video from residents & Cllr Griffin to follow up with West Berkshire Council to see whether any action can be taken.

10. Next meeting

Next meeting proposed as 9th January

11. To record the time meeting closed

20.28