

# Widford Parish Council

**Minutes of the Widford Parish Council Ordinary Meeting  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.30pm in Widford Village Hall**



PRESENT: Cllr Mike Allen (MA) Chair; Cllr Mark Rome (MR); Cllr Josh Warren (JW)  
Five members of the public  
Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

**ACTION**

**26.045 To receive and approve apologies for absence**

1. Councillors: Cllr Ian Collins (Business) **APPROVED**; Cllr Andy Djemal
2. Others: Cllr Eric Buckmaster; Dinah Findlay

**26.046 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations**

**1. Interests**

None declared. Noted: Cllr Mike Allen has an interest in Playing Field matters, being a trustee.  
Noted: Cllr Ian Collins has a DPI because his wife has the Closed Churchyard maintenance contract.

**2. Dispensation requests:**

None

**26.047 Approval of Minutes**

**RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on March 2026 are a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes

3<sup>rd</sup>

Clerk/  
MA

**26.048 Police report**

**Crime Report April 2026**

\*NO RECORDED CRIMES – Does not include reports for domestic incidents, child protection investigations, or sexual offences. Not all reported incidents end up being recorded as crimes and will therefore not appear on the report.

<b>ALBURY</b> No reported crimes	<b>ANSTEY</b> No reported crimes
<b>BRENT PELHAM</b> 1 x Theft	<b>DASSELS</b> No reported crimes
<b>EASTWICK &amp; GILSTON</b> 1 x Fly tip; 1 x Criminal damage	<b>FURNEUX PELHAM</b> No reported crimes
<b>GREAT HADHAM</b> No reported crimes	<b>GREEN TYE</b> No reported crimes
<b>HORMEAD</b> 1 x Criminal damage; 1 x Residential burglary 1 x Business burglary	<b>HUNSDON</b> 1 x Attempted Burglary
<b>LITTLE HADHAM</b> No reported crimes	<b>MUCH HADHAM</b> 1 x Theft of motor vehicle 1 x Theft; 1 x Business burglary
<b>STOCKING PELHAM</b> No reported crimes	<b>WARESIDE</b> 1 x Criminal damage
<b>WIDFORD</b> No reported crimes	<b>MEEDSDEN</b> 1 x Fly tip

# UNAPPROVED DRAFT<sup>1</sup>

## Other news and updates:

The Neighbourhood Policing Team are still actively working to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour locally in and around Buntingford.

Many reports have been made on Social Media platforms but not to police. Police actively investigate all incidents and crimes that have been properly reported. Some of these are ongoing investigations or are in the process of action being taken.

We are also aware of the use of e-bikes in Buntingford, with a couple of the riders having previously made off from police. Research and intelligence gathering is ongoing to identify the riders and where these bikes maybe located.

In other news, the team have:-

- Arrested two males acting suspiciously at a property in the Pelhams. Officers immediately recognised them as burglary suspects linked to multiple incidents stretching across Essex and Hertfordshire.
- Investigated several fly tips, identifying potential offenders.
- Seized a van that failed to stop for police in Buntingford for no insurance. Further investigation found Class A and B drugs in the vehicle.
- Seized an e-Scooter being ridden in Buntingford.
- Identified and found the driver of a vehicle who crashed into road signs on the A10 Buntingford.
- Identified several vehicles reportedly involved in cannabis use and/or supply in Buntingford. Three vehicles have been stopped and dealt with so far.
- Caught and sanctioned a young person with an off-road motorcycle.
- Assisted with evidence capture for two serious sexual assaults in Bishops Stortford.
- Conducted several police operations across the Rural area's of Buckland, Chipping and The Pelhams for Hare coursing and poaching
- Conducted several operations with regards to anti-social vehicle use across area's including Broxbourne Woods, Thundridge and High Cross.

The constabulary are particularly keen for local people to give us feedback on policing via the Herts Connected surveys. We will be looking to set our policing priorities for the upcoming quarter and would very much appreciate if you could share the link and QR code below on social media:-

<https://bit.ly/hertspolice-psf>

If you need to report a crime in progress, please call 999, for all others please use 101 or online reporting <https://www.herts.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

The Herts Connected system delivers Hertfordshire police's crime alerts. Registered local residents can receive the latest crime or emergency updates and alerts, as well as information about policing events in your area. Local residents can get involved in helping to make their local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in their area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe, and tell us what matters are causing local communities harm.

The more residents that register, the better informed and safer our communities will be. We would be most grateful if you could continue to share the link below in any parish communications, and especially on social media, to encourage as many local residents as possible to sign up.

<https://www.hertsconnected.co.uk/>

Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Additional Crime Prevention Advice can be found via this link:

<https://www.herts.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/> Thank you

East Herts Rural Highlights Video 2024-25

<https://youtu.be/bnf6PE4uuvvc?feature=shared>

## 26.049 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman reported that about 150 yards of ditch by the allotments has now been cleared and the footpath reopened. The village hall pub nights have been good and well attended.

MA

## 26.050 Reports by County and District Councillors

No District report received.

# UNAPPROVED DRAFT<sup>1</sup>

County Cllr Eris Buckmaster's written report was received and is included as an appendix to these Minutes. I particular it was noted that the new ePass system for Hertfordshire recycling centres went live on April 1<sup>st</sup>. It is very quick and easy to register an ePass for a private car. Harlow in Essex remains as is with a booking system and is accessible by Hertfordshire residents.

## 26.051 Planning

### 1. New Applications:

NONE	
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### 2. Decision Notices. For information only, the following were noted:

3/26/0196/HH	3 The Willows: Single storey extension.	GRANTED
3/26/0095/HH	9 Benningfield Road: First floor side extension, conversion of existing garage into habitable space, replacement of garage door with window and dining room window with patio doors.	GRANTED
3/25/0182/FUL	Youngs Little Acre: Retention of a welfare unit and a turkey preparation and storage building <b>APPEALED Reference: 25/00060/REFUSE</b> <i>Awaiting more information on the enforcement action that is being implemented.</i>	APPEAL DISMISSED
3/26/0398/HH	The Croft, Nether Street: Roof alterations and extensions; replacement gable roof with 2 x dormers to front and 3 x dormers to rear. Construct storm porch and single storey front, side and rear extensions. Demolish existing rear extension and conservatory.	Awaited
3/25/0901/OUT	Priory Farm: Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the demolition of the Doe Shed and erection of single self-build dwelling and associated infrastructure.	Awaited
3/25/0480/OUT	Land South of Levenage Lane: Outline planning for 8 houses.	Awaited
3/24/1495/FUL	Land at Bourne Lane: Change of use of land to a glamping site. <b>APPEALED Ref: 25/00043/REFUSE</b>	Appeal awaited

### 1. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda: **NONE**

#### 1. Late applications: NONE

2. Land for sale and Bourne Lane access. Ongoing concerns and action regarding the land and access in question. This to be kept as a running agenda item until the matter is resolved.

IC

## 26.052 Finance

### 1. Report of the Council's accounts at year end, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

<b>Finance Summary to 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>		<b>£</b>
<b>Opening cashbook balance 28<sup>th</sup> February</b>		<b>35,601.09</b>
Plus: income to 31 <sup>st</sup> March		0.00
Minus: expenditure to 31 <sup>st</sup> March		<u>1,235.00</u>
<b>Balance available to Council at year end, 31<sup>st</sup> March (cashbook balance)</b>		<b>34,366.09</b>
Unpresented cheques/payments		<u>0.00</u>
<b>Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at year end, 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>		<b><u>34,366.09</u></b>

**RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 be approved as presented.**

### 2. Bank reconciliation year end, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Cashbook balance £34,366.09    Unity Bank balance £34,366.09

**RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented.**

# UNAPPROVED DRAFT<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Performance vs budget at year end, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

The Clerk's detailed report on the net performance vs budget at 31<sup>st</sup> March was received.

Income: Budget £18,565 Performance at 31<sup>st</sup> March £18,436

Expenditure: Budget £29,962 Performance at 31<sup>st</sup> March £20,009

The income/expenditure deficit at 31<sup>st</sup> March is -£1,213 against -£11,397 deficit budgeted.

Summary: Opening cashbook balance 01/04/25	£35,939
Cashbook Income to 31/03/26 Gross	£18,436
Cashbook Expenditure to 31/03/26 Gross	<u>£20,009</u>
Cashbook balance 31/03/26	<u>£34,366</u>

**RESOLVED: The performance report to year end 31<sup>st</sup> March be accepted as presented.**

Itemised details of the 2025/26 performance against the budget may be viewed on the Parish Council website, <https://widfordparishcouncil.gov.uk>

### 4. List of payments.

**RESOLVED: to approve the list of payments as presented by the Clerk**

Clerk

*All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.*

		Gross	VAT incl
Mrs J English	Litter picking April 1 of 12	157.50	
Accounts book-keeping	Internal audit 2025/26	110.00	
Clerk reimburse	Annual Electorate meeting refreshments	7.57	
Clerk reimburse	Office stationery	7.99	
Clerk	Salary April	495.60	
HMRC	PAYE April	123.80	
HMRC	Employer's NIC April	30.36	
HAPTC	Annual membership	413.70	
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge monthly	7.00	
Zurich Municipal	Insurance 01/06/26 – 31/05/27	449.31	
Sharon Collins	Closed churchyard 1 of 4	325.00	
Mrs J English	Litter picking May 2 of 12	157.50	
Clerk	Expenses April-May	26.30	
Widford Playing Field	Maintenance grant	850.00	
EHDC	Dog bin servicing annual contract	831.00	138.50
Clerk	Salary May	495.60	
HMRC	PAYE May	123.80	
HMRC	Employer's NIC May	30.36	
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge monthly	7.00	
<b>Recoverable VAT included</b>			<b>£ 138.50</b>

### 5. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

**1. RESOLVED: That the Parish Council meets the criteria and wishes to be an exempt authority**

Clerk

**2. The RFO and Chairman signed the Certificate of Exemption**

RFO/MA

**3. RESOLVED: To approve the Internal Auditor's signed Internal Audit Report**

Clerk

**4. RESOLVED: To approve Section 1: The Annual Governance Statement.** The Clerk and the presiding Chairman signed Section 1.

Clerk/  
MA

**5. Section 2 Accounting Statements** as signed by the RFO was considered by the Council.

**6. RESOLVED: To approve Section 2 Accounting Statements as presented.** The presiding Chairman signed Section 2.

MA

**7. RESOLVED: to set the 30-working days for the Exercise of Public Rights as 3 June to 14 July**

Clerk

**8. Noted: the AGAR submission deadline is Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July**

Clerk

# UNAPPROVED DRAFT<sup>1</sup>

- 26.053 Village Archive**
- 1. Rackline order update:** 50% deposit paid to Rackline and is now on hold until space is ready for delivery.
- 26.054 Correspondence:** The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:
- Cllr E Buckmaster: Arrangements for River Crossing Roadworks at Gilston/Eastwick Lodge
  - National Allotment Society request to complete national local authority survey
  - Kevin Steptoe EHC: Gilston Area Community Forum - Tues 12 May
  - Parishioner: information re E/24/0211/ENF Youngs Little Acre
  - HCC: Road closure notices
- 26.055 Village Reports**
- 1. Village Hall**
    1. There is good regular income and the pub nights are working well.
  - 2. Playing Field**
    1. The Chairman said the grass continues to be mown regularly and the hedges have now been cut, making the area very amenable to public use. The playing field could benefit from being better signposted. **MA**
  - 3. Allotments**
    1. All ok with no issues reported.
    2. Mains water supply: Feasibility continues to be explored by the committee, but the cost is high. To be reviewed again in due course. **Clerk**
    3. 2025/26 grasscutting: Cllr Ian Collins to check whether payment is to be made. **IC**
  - 4. Closed Churchyard.**
    1. No issues reported. Maintenance is ongoing. **IC**
- 26.053 Highways, Footpaths and byways**
- 1. Footpaths and PRoW.**
    1. All work for the footpath gate and ditch clearance has been completed. **MA**
  - 2. Highways and footways**
    1. Update on Enforcement issues by Greenacres: No update or change on the issue. Retain as an ongoing agenda issue. **MA**
    2. Accident at the old railway bridge wall: HCC has this on a programme for this year with possibly a 20mph zone around the accident area. Also possibly a rumble strip to be added.
  - 3. Other parish matters and concern**
    1. Nether Street railing repairs: he Chairman yet to pursue with the HCC officer and to get a price for suitable repairs. **MA**
    2. **Defibrillator management.** A new cabinet door has been delivered to the Chairman who will make the repair. **MA**
    3. **Other matters:** None raised **Clerk**
- 26.057 Benningfield Green**  
No issues reported.
- 26.058 Change to .gov.uk domain and email address.**  
New email is up and running for councillors Mike Allen and Ian Collins. Ongoing with other councillors. **JW/MR /AD**
- 26.059 Urgent matters** and other matters received too late for inclusion on this agenda:  
A parishioner reported that the hedge along the B1004 between its junctions with the B180 and Bell Lane is very overgrown and is obstructing road signs. The Clerk to make fault report to HCC Highways. **Clerk**

# UNAPPROVED DRAFT<sup>1</sup>

## At 8.25 the meeting was suspended for public comments

A parishioner reported that a car regularly parked at the registered green outside Chapel House is preventing cars using it as a turning point when wishing to turn back north into the village. It also obstructs the farmer accessing the field. The Clerk was asked to write a letter to Chapel House asking them to park more considerately. Cllr Ian Collins also to speak to the farmer.

Clerk

IC

It was reported that information is not accessible on the website. The Clerk said he would check, but everything was accessible and up to date the day before the meeting.

Clerk

The temporary closure at Benningfield Road was noted.

## At 8.35 the meeting was restored to order

26.060 Items for future agendas: None raised

Clerk

26.061 Date of next meetings – all in the Village Hall

July 7<sup>th</sup>; September 8<sup>th</sup>; November 3<sup>rd</sup>; January 5<sup>th</sup> 2027

Clerk/  
MA

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.37pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

## APPENDIX A

### E Buckmaster County Councillor Report May 2026

Following our Area SEND monitoring inspection in October 2025, the Secretary of State for Education has confirmed the decision to lift Hertfordshire's Improvement Notice.

The decision recognises key improvements and progress made across the local area partnership, including stronger governance and quality assurance, improved performance against statutory timescales, better use of data, and more meaningful coproduction with children, young people and families.

### Albury School

#### WHETHER TO AGREE TO THE STATUTORY PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ALBURY Church of England VA PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 31 AUGUST 2026

DECISION: -Cabinet, in relation to the proposal to close Albury C of E VA Primary School, decided to approve the proposal. The cabinet decision has subsequently been called in and will be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### Hertfordshire moves forward with franchising

Hertfordshire County Council is progressing with its involvement in the Government's Bus Reform and Franchising Pilot Programme. Bus franchising could improve routes, fares, and service standards by giving it more control over how services are run. Mark Doran, Executive Director for Growth and Environment, said: "This is an exciting step for Hertfordshire. More regular and reliable bus services could make a real difference to our residents."

### Hertfordshire County Council appoints Believ to deliver £38m of EV infrastructure |

Hertfordshire County Council has appointed electric vehicle (EV) charge point operator (CPO) Believ to assist in the £38 million rollout of public EV charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking.

Mark Doran, Executive Director for Growth and Environment, said: "We know that lack of access to home charging can be a barrier for many people, particularly those without driveways. This programme will help address that by providing reliable, convenient charging options closer to where people live. It also supports our commitment to growing a greener Hertfordshire by reducing emissions and enabling more sustainable journeys across the county."

### £169m sales of Hertfordshire council land and buildings expected by 2030

# UNAPPROVED DRAFT<sup>1</sup>

Hertfordshire County Council has agreed plans that could see £169 million raised from the sale of land and buildings by March 2030 as part of a new strategic asset management plan. The proposed disposals are intended to help address a significant funding gap, with the council stating that assets should only be retained where they directly support services, deliver community benefits or generate income.

## **Consultation on Bus Services Help us choose new stop locations - HertsLynx Survey**

HertsLynx is Hertfordshire's on-demand bus service, providing flexible transport in rural and less well-served areas. We want to make HertsLynx easier for people to use. We're looking at where we could add new stops. Your feedback will help us decide.

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/)

Closes 8th May 2026. Separate email sent to local parishes

## About HertsLynx

HertsLynx is an on-demand bus service serving villages in North and East Herts and fixed destinations in Key Hub Towns: Bishop's Stortford, Royston, Baldock, Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth. The HertsLynx service is designed to improve connections between rural areas and town centres, as well as expand access to employment, education, healthcare and shopping.

## **UPDATE ON DELIVERY OF NEW SCHOOL PLACES TO SUPPORT EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE THE GILSTON DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL TO CAPITAL SPEND AGAINST S106 DEVELOPER FUNDING**

Cabinet agreed to authorise:

- (i) approval of the capital budget for a 3FE Primary School in Village 1 of £18.53m (DfE scorecard cost plus indexation and 10% sustainability uplift) – funding dependent upon timing of programme (either through Housing Investment Grant or S106);
- (ii) approval of the capital budget for Village 7 Primary School of £18.53m (funded by s106 contributions);
- (iii) approval to allocate funding from s106 contributions (as funding is received) for Village 1 Primary School (dependent upon timing and HIG) and Village 7 Primary School; and
- (iv) approval for the final contract value of Village 1 primary school and Village 7 primary school schemes to be delegated to the Executive Director of Childrens Services & Education, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Executive Members of Education, SEND & Inclusion and Resources and Performance.

Cabinet also noted that the Council will, at an appropriate time in the school delivery programme, run a competition to seek an appropriate School Trust to run the new school(s) within the development.

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster, May 2026

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