

COLDWALTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD

ON TUESDAY 21st APRIL 2026 @ 7.30PM

AT THE SANDHAM MEMORIAL VILLAGE HALL

Those Present:

Cllr G Nelson	Chairman
Cllr J Evans	Vice – Chairman
Cllr O Dudman	Cllr C Dennis
Cllr A Davies	Cllr K Coughtrey
Cllr I Dregar	Cllr J Stevens
Mrs LD Sherlock-Fuidge	Parish Clerk

Parishioners: Peter Hoare

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting for Coldwaltham Parish.

1.00 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from all three District Councillors, no other apologies received.

2.00 TO APPROVE AS CORRECT THE RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 22ND APRIL 2025.

Minutes of the last meeting held on the 22nd April 2025, were signed as a true and correct record.

3.00 MATTERS ARISING

None arising, which wasn't to be covered in the meeting.

4.00 CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS

Parish Council Report:

Once again, another busy year.

Our key role is to be informed representatives for our community (but not delegates) and this we continue to strive for making the views of the PC and the parish to our neighbours, to the District and County Councils, the Police, SDNP and many others. This is clearly expressed in our priority statement which will soon be circulated for consultation.

The detail of what we do is in our minutes, but a few issues deserve to be highlighted.

As stated last year we continue to campaign over the roads, traffic and speeding in our village and once again a very big thank you to Iain Dredger for leading on this issue, being the key author of an action plan, negotiating with WSCC and we are going to see the impact of this plan over the next 18 months.

Planning remains a key issue for many residents. Thank you to Celia for her lead on this; it never stops. There was a key planning application this year in the parish which led to a well-attended public meeting and a great many comments; this is currently on hold, but we can assure you that we are watching this issue and will circulate any news we receive. There is no news on the land south of the A29.

N.B. The Clerk advised that the application was available again, however there had been no material changes to the application.

As a PC we continue to provide support for the Alban Head which continues to be a treasured local asset and is summarised separately.

Having successfully raised many thousands of pounds, for the reintroduction of our Post Office and putting money aside from the Precept, we now end our involvement and wish the new 'friends' every best wish in the future.

New issues come into view regularly and we welcome this evening a local resident who has expressed an interest in helping with the Brookland Way Play Area. This issue is at an early stage, and we will update the community with any future developments.

We try to advertise what we do, a special thanks to John for all the PC summaries in 'The Link', but we are open, within our resources, to enhance local awareness of what we do and how to engage with issues that concern residents.

We remain committed to supporting local organisations and extend a warm welcome to Martin, our newly appointed vicar.

A most sincere thanks to all members of the PC for all your support in keeping our parish well represented.

As ever a special thanks to our clerk, Dona, who continues to guide us, keep us legal and ensures our accounts are always in the best of order. Thank you.

I said last year 'We live in interesting times....' to do with Council re-organisation; but currently there is no specific news on this as any decision has been postponed until after the County Council elections.

Thank you to the wider community in our three-hamlet parish, we appreciate your support and engagement with us.

Cllr Dregar gave a quick summary of A29 Community highways scheme: submitted in 2024, we heard that it was successful in Mar'25, met with West Sussex Traffic Officers in Jul'25, They have agreed to put: a 20mph zone either side of school, extend the 30mph toward Pulborough and change the 60mph to 40mph for the rest of the A29 towards Pulborough, this will include a visual narrowing at Watersfield and Coldwaltham, and agreement to a pair of village gates at Watersfield and Coldwaltham, and in principle for a pair of village gates at Hardham. Work is expected to commence sometime between Oct 26 to Mar 27. A TRO is required for the changes to speed limits and is thought to be coming out in the next few weeks. This is part of a wider focus by West Sussex on road safety.

West Sussex will monitor the changes following the implementation of the speed changes for 12 months, if West Sussex find that the changes are ineffective further measures may be added. Andrew Griffiths (our MP) has commented that he would support installing average speed cameras in West Sussex

Cllr Dregar wished to rejuvenate our parish's Speed Watch, but currently it is short of volunteers.

Cllr Nelson welcomed Peter Hoare in supporting the Brookland Way Play Area, he summarised that HDC had contacted CPC regarding an Asset Transfer of assets to local communities. Any group must have a business plan to demonstrate its ability to manage the asset. Currently, there are three volunteers. There isn't a time limit, however, with the Unitary Authority due in 24 months it might need to be before then. Further canvassing of wider residents, and at the school and Chuckleberries to encourage further support and volunteers would be actioned. Also, to push the community aspect of the area for more than just a children's area. Any time frame

for actual improvements can be more long term once the site has been secured.

Alban Head Playing Field Report:

Climate change

As I reported last year the impact of climate change is causing us considerable challenges again this year. We had a really hot, dry summer with all the consequences of this to the field followed by saturating rain in the new year. Some of the field now needs an investment we currently do not have the funds for.

A second major challenge we have been facing is the ever-increasing costs in running and maintaining a playing field. Although we know this reflects a national picture it is hard work to set a budget and meet unexpected demands with very little reserve. For instance, we have two large trees needing felling this year with all the costs incurred. This has meant that this month, for the first time, we set a deficit budget hoping to save on costs elsewhere such as groundsman hours.

Southern Water may be putting a new pipeline across the area in the next few years, and this might have an impact upon us as their original line went across the front of the playing field.

Despite these challenges we continue to work hard as a committee to preserve and enhance the playing field.

We had a new youth football team start in 2025 and West Chiltonton Colts Cricket began using the ground last summer for the first time. It is wonderful to see the field being used by a wide age range and different sports. We always seek new users and encourage other groups such as the local Scouts and Lodge Hill Activity Centre to come down to the field. We are hoping to raise additional funds over the next few years to refurbish and develop the club house.

As ever a big thank you to all Trustees and the members of the Alban Head Committee for their continued support.

We are fortunate to have this much-loved local resource, and I am confident it continues to be a well-managed and appreciated local asset for our community. The PC are actively involved, not least checking the Alban Head finances at every meeting.

We continue to be fortunate in the high-quality service provided by our Parish Clerk to the management committee.

We continue to update our field investment plan with 'jobs done' and future needs;

these include putting new lighting in the Club House, replacing and mending the car park fencing and improved security for our garage with a new container for the tractor.

We have responded to the annual Health and Safety report on the children's play area and conduct greater checks than ever before to facilitate our insurance.

Thank you to our employees and volunteers who give their time and energy so constructively.

We will continue to invest our time and efforts to sustain the Alban Head as the special place our community wish it to be.

5.00 FINANCE REPORT FROM THE PARISH CLERK

The Clerk to the Parish Council presented the unaudited accounts for both the Parish Council and the Alban Head Playing Field for the Year 2025-26.

At the end of the year, the Parish Council had reserves totalling £16,631, which was higher than the previous year thanks to receiving £8,200 in CIL Funds from SDNPA. In December 2024, they approved a budget of £19,437—an increase of £1,262 specifically to help fund the Post Office. The Precept was raised to £19,288, supporting the initiative to re-open the Post Office.

The Alban Head Committee's account balance decreased to £5,184. The committee experienced increased expenses due to annual insurance premiums, tree removal operations, and tractor maintenance services.

The Parish Council continues to support the Alban Head Playing Fields, which remains a valuable resource for the local community.

6.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Evans wished to acknowledge an enormous thank you to Sheila Hewer, who has coordinated the Neighbourhood Watch in this area for many years. The group is looking for a new volunteer who will take on this responsibility. Also, there have been changes in the way Sussex Police are reporting crime. Sussex Police have highlighted the centre of Horsham as a hotspot for crime, but outside of Horsham the emphasis for Sussex Police is more regarding cyber-crime.

The Clerk passed on an update from D Cllr Clarke, regarding the current roadworks on Church Hill.

Cllr Dreger clarified that the weight limit at Coldwaltham Railway Bridge, of

40tonnes matched the maximum weight limit for lorries at the time. Network Rail has stated that the weight restriction is consistent with the maximum permitted weight for lorries now.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....

These minutes will be signed at the next Annual Parish Meeting in April 2027