

**Minutes of the High Wych Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 18th March 2026
8pm in Allen’s Green Village Hall**

Cllr Tom Payne (TP) Chairman* Cllr Carrie Payne (CP)*
 Cllr John Andreotti (JA)* Cllr Brian Sullivan (BS)* following co-option
 Cllr Jacqueline Jackson (JJ)* * **Denotes present**

Present: Four members of the public; County Cllr Eric Buckmaster joined the meeting at 8.47pm

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.00pm.

ACTION

26.015 Apologies for absence

1. Councillors: None (all present)
2. Others: PC Shelly Marshall

26.016 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. **Interests declared:** Cllrs Tom and Carrie Payne non pecuniary re FP001 (26.010.2.1);
 Cllr Jacqueline Jackson non pecuniary re Community Fireworks (26010.3.2.1)
2. **Dispensation requests:** None.

26.017 Co-option

Brian Sullivan’s co-option application was considered and it was **RESOLVED that Brian Sullivan be co-opted as a member of the Parish Council.** The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed and Cllr Sullivan joined the meeting.

Clerk

No other co-option applications were received for the two remaining vacant seats.

26.018 Approval of Minutes

1. **RESOLVED: to approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 14th January 2026.** The Chairman signed the Minutes.

Clerk

The meeting was not suspended for public comments

26.019 Chairman’s announcements

The Chairman made no announcements.

26.020 East Herts Rural Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT).

1. Crime report

The Chairman read the following report from PC Shelly Marshall:

High Wych Parish Council Meeting 18/03/2026

The next community drop in event is on Thursday 26th March, 6pm at The Memorial Hall Car Park. Full details will be shared on Herts Connected. Local officers PC Marshall & PCSO Collins will be in attendance, this is an opportunity for the community to come and talk to us and discuss issues within the community.

The new policing priority was set as reducing reports of road traffic offences on Harlow Road, Sawbridgeworth. This will be supported by proactive patrols, as well as policing operations.

An operation was held on Wednesday 11th March at the location which saw over 40 vehicles stopped, insurance and driver license checks conducted. Three traffic offences reports for road traffic offences were issued and one vehicle defect rectification scheme report was also issued. Crime and reports of anti-social behaviour remains low within the parish; we continue to work with our partners to ensure this remains the case.

As we enter the summer months and the lighter evenings there will be a continued police presence to assist with minimising reports of anti-social behaviour.

JA

2. Cross border report

The following report was received from Cllr Jacqueline Jackson:

S,S,HW,HBO&HH Cross Border Meeting actions

Notes from the Cross Border Meeting on the 25th Feb 2026

Understand from Eric that the flood along High Wych Lane will be investigated in April. Speeding, Litter & House Building on the grey belt were the other main topics of conversation.

Also - F&B School (Knight Street) are looking to close the road outside of the school during drop off and pick up. They are also doing a campaign re walking to school and if a parent must drive to turn off their engine when parked.....

Hatfield Heath close the car park next to the school to stop parents parking and leaving engines running.

Sheering have requested red lines outside of the school.

Maybe some ideas that we could discuss with the Head Teacher of HWPC?

Jacqueline

3. Drug paraphernalia in bus shelter reported by HCC:

From Rachel Hall

To highwychparishclerk@gmail.com

Date 19-02-2026

Dear Clerk, Re Bus shelter High Wych

I am writing on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council regarding a report of drug paraphernalia at the "Rising Sun PH" bus shelter. Our records have this shelter as being maintained by the parish council but as a courtesy I have requested for our roadside maintenance contractor to clean the shelter and remove any drug paraphernalia.

The 47 bus service is due to serve High Wych from the 29th March 2026, so we believe that this piece of infrastructure should remain for bus users. However, we are concerned by reports of drug paraphernalia being present and potential risks this poses to both bus users and pedestrians. We recommend that you liaise with community police officers in order to discourage this shelter from being used for drug dealings.

Kind regards,

Rachel Hall

Bus Infrastructure Officer | Integrated Passenger Transport Unit | Hertfordshire County Council.

The Clerk reported this to the police who said they would keep an eye on the bus shelter. The police have agreed to add this to their patrol plan. No incidence has been observed since the HCC report and the bus shelter has remained clean.

26.021 Reports by County and District Councillors

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster's written report is included in the Minutes as Appendix B.

District Cllr Ian Devonshire did not submit a report.

26.022 Planning

1. New Applications:

3/26/0247/HH	1 Stepped Gable Mews, High Wych Lane: Replacement windows and doors. RESOLVED: No objections.	Clerk
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2. Decision Notices. As detailed in Appendix A below – for information only

3. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda: NONE

26.023 Finance

1. Report of the Council's Accounts at 28th February 2026

Opening cashbook balance 1 st January 2026	24,123.61
Plus income to 28 th February	0.00
Minus expenditure to 28 th February	<u>1,868.43</u>
Balance available to Council at 28th February (cashbook balance)	22,255.18
Plus unrepresented payments	<u>0.00</u>
Bank statement/cashbook balance 28th February 2026	<u>22,255.18</u>

RESOLVED: That the Accounts Statement to 28th February 2026 be approved.

Clerk

2. Accounts Reconciliation at 28th February 2026

Cashbook balance 28 th February	£22,255.18
Bank balance 28 th February	£22,255.18

Clerk

RESOLVED: To agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

3. Performance against 2025/26 budget at 28th February 2026

	Budget	Actual 28 th February
Income	22,036	22,709
PWLB Loan	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Income total	<u>22,036</u>	<u>22,709</u>

	Budget	Actual 28 th February
Expenditure Net of VAT	24,445	18,538
PWLB Loan servicing	0	<u>0</u>
Expenditure balance Net of VAT	<u>24,445</u>	<u>16,720</u>

Budgetted deficit 2025/26	- 2,409
Actual net budget surplus 28 th February	4,171
Forecast deficit year-end 31 st March	- 591
Opening bank balance 1 st April 2025	18,876
Bank balance 28 th February 2026	22,255
Forecast bank balance year-end 31 st March 2026	19,467

Clerk

RESOLVED: To agree the performance against budget as presented.

4. Payments for approval: All expenditure to be made under The General Power of Competence As at 11th March

		Value	VAT incl
Everflow Water	Water 14/2 – 13/3 in credit: Nil charge	0.00	
Everflow Water	Water 14/3 – 13/4 in credit: Nil charge	0.00	
Color-Board Ltd	Poo and litter bins January	120.00	20.00
Color-Board Ltd	Poo and litter bins February	120.00	20.00
Color-Board Ltd	Poo and litter bins March	120.00	20.00
Clerk	Salary February	514.20	
HMRC	PAYE February	128.40	
HMRC	Employer's NIC	33.84	
Clerk	Salary March	514.00	
HMRC	PAYE March	128.60	
HMRC	Employer's NIC	33.84	
Clerk	Expenses February/ March	21.80	
High Wych Mem Hall	Electricity car park lights	29.49	
High Wych Mem Hall	Post Office subsidy Q1 2026	96.25	
Mokut Mower Services	Grass cutting 12/3 and 26/3 TBC	350.00	
TP Jones LLP	Payroll January-March TBC	64.40	10.73
High Wych Mem Hall	Parish Council meeting 14/01/26 TBC	15.00	
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service charge TBC	7.00	
** Grass cutting KGV Field High Wych and Allen's Green village green			
VAT included To be reclaimed under VAT Act 1994 (1), (3)			70.73

Clerk

RESOLVED: to approve all payments as per the Clerk's report

5. Request to fund portaloos for the Scarecrow Festival

The request to fund the portaloos for the September Scarecrow Festival was considered. The best price quoted to Janet Bellingham was £490 ex VAT against a budget of £550.

RESOLVED: To order the potaloos for the quoted price of £490 + VAT. The Clerk to raise the order.

Clerk

The question of providing dedicated litter bins was raised.

26.024 1. Highways

1. Blounts Lane speeding issues: Ongoing possible resolution with Cllr Eric Buckmaster. The Clerk presented an advertisement from a company supplying SIDs. **EB/TP**
2. A parishioner's complaint about the alleged ineffective deployment of the police speed van in High Wych Road was noted, but acknowledged that the matter is beyond the powers of the Parish Council.
3. TRO 29637 notice of High Wych Lane closure was noted.
TRO 29693 notice of Broadfields closure was noted.

2. Footpaths and other Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

1. Fly tipping on Byeway12, off Friars Lane was noted and reported on the HCC fault system.
2. FP001 gate installation: It was noted that the gate has been approved by the Rights of Way Officer and will be installed shortly by the land owner.

3. Other Parish Matters

1. High Wych Memorial Hall and car park

1. Update on matters raised at the November meeting:
 - iii) Moving PC records from HWMH to HALS (County Archive): Theo van de Bilt is reviewing. Cllr Tom Payne agreed to follow up.
2. Parishioner complaint about noise and possible drug use in the car park: Cllr John Andreotti said that nothing had been noted on the CCTV, although the glare of car headlights facing the camera make identification of actions impossible. He agreed to raise the issue with the police at the open meeting later in March and to ask the police to pull in and look round to create a "drive by" presence when they are patrolling the area at night.
3. The police have also advised that two SORN cars left in the car park cannot be moved because the car park is regarded as private (even though it is open to the public!).

2. Other matters

1. To consider parishioner's guidance and proposed motion for fireworks events:
 - (i) Community fireworks guidance
 - (ii) proposed Motion to adopt revised Community Fireworks Code of Practice Policy
 - (iii) proposed Community Fireworks Code of Practice
 - (iv) proposed Public Consultation on Community Fireworks Code of Practice
 - (v) proposed Community Fireworks Guidance Note and Code of Practice

RESOLVED: To adopt Community fireworks guidance and Code of Practice as per items (i) to (iii). These to be added to the parish Council website.

Clerk

Items (iv) and (v) were not adopted.

2. New domain and email addresses: Ongoing with councillors.

ALL

3. Post Office opening: The Clerk said the reason the Post Office was not open on the 2nd and 5th of February was due to staff sickness. Whether the HWMH charge to the Parish Council reflects that closure is to be checked at the next HWMH meeting.

4. Sawbobus: A parishioner asked whether the Sawbobus could include Allen's Green in its schedule. Sawbridgeworth Town Council to assess the cost and logistics and will make a decision about whether it would be viable. This may not happen quickly, so keep item on the agenda for future reference.

Clerk

3. Confirming actions from 2025 meetings

The Council was asked to confirm actions on the following issues from 2025:

- HWPC Christmas tree (March Minute 25.024.3.5: earlier proposals not being pursued). **RESOLVED: Add to the September agenda – Christmas tree in a pot.**
- Flower / Plant holder at the corner of the play area. **RESOLVED: Cllr Tom Payne to remove and dispose.**

Clerk

TP

- Adding yellow lines to car park to identify accessible parking. Cllr John Andreotti had a very competitive quote of £850 + VAT. **RESOLVED: To accept the quote of £850 ex VAT – Cllr John Andreotti to arrange.**
- Car left in Car Park - with a SORN notice: *Refer to item 26.024.3.1.3 above.*
- Additional bin outside HTC pavilion. *To check with EHDC for possible provision.*
- Removal of bin by Coffee Lounge. **RESOLVED: Cllr Tom Payne to remove.**

JA

TP

26.025 1. Playing Fields and buildings

1. Harlow Theatre Company

1. No issues raised.

2. Play area

1. Disintegrating swing seat cover: Sovereign Play should rectify under warranty. Cllr Tom Payne confirmed these are still under warranty.
2. Gate lock: Cllr Tom Payne confirmed this has been fitted.

TP

TP

3. Other parish matters raised

None raised.

2. Allotments

1. Nothing to report.

26.026 Correspondence: The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:

- Parishioner: Request for Council to reconsider proposals community fireworks concerns (26.024.3.2.1)
- Report about Post Office not open on 2nd and 5th February (26.024.3.2.3)
- HCC report of drugs paraphernalia in bus shelter (26.020.3)
- Report of fly tipping on Byway 12 (26.024.2.1)
- Email request for Sawbobus to include Allen’s Green (26.024.3.2.4)
- Parishioner: Complaint about ineffective police speed van deployed in High Wych Road. (26.024.1.2)
- Parishioner: Complaint about noise and possible drug use in Memorial Hall car park (26.024.3.1.2)

26.027 Late items and items for future agendas

1. No late items raised.
2. Obtain quote for trimming allotments boundary hedge before Scarecrow Festival.
3. Other items raise for future agendas

26.028 Date and venue of next Parish Council meeting

13th May High Wych Memorial Hall (*Annual Parish Electorate Meeting, followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting, followed by the May Ordinary Parish Council Meeting*);

15th July Allen’s Green Village Hall; **16th September** High Wych Memorial Hall;

18th November Allen’s Green Village Hall; **20th January 2027** High Wych Memorial Hall

Clerk
Clerk

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10.30pm.

Signed.....Dated

APPENDIX A

26.022.2 26.022.2 PLANNING DECISION NOTICES for information only as at 12th March

3/25/1744/HH	Vine Cottage High Wych Lane: Erect single storey side extension with glazed link and roof lights. Replace windows to existing rear.	GRANTED
3/25/0401/FUL	Surrounded, Coveys Lane: Change of use grazing land to residential garden. APPEALED to the Planning Inspectorate	APPEAL ALLOWED WITH CONDITIONS

3/25/1578/FUL	Little Toad Hall, 3 Trimms Green: Demolish sheds; site a mobile holiday home and new boundary fence.	Awaited
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APPENDIX B

E Buckmaster County Councillor Report March 2026

Local Flood Risk Measures Update

Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots Construction of the leaky dams is completed. We are assessing the success of the dams via the monitoring installed at the culvert and will be completing inspections throughout the year.

Hunsdon Alleviation Scheme Clearance works were carried out on the watercourse in December. We are currently waiting on an update from our Highways team on these works.

Flood Kits in Communities The second phase of the scheme is still open for communities to sign up. You can register for the scheme via our Hertfordshire Flood Kit Application form. [Hertfordshire Flood Kit Application form](#). The application is open until 31st March 2026.

Consultation still open. Central Government invites Hertfordshire residents to have their say on Local Government Reorganisation

Residents and organisations across Hertfordshire are being urged to have their say on proposals to change the structure of local government in the county

In February 2025, the Government invited councils to submit proposals for local government reorganisation to simplify local government and reduce costs. The Government has today (5 February 2026) launched a seven-week statutory consultation on the proposals.

In Hertfordshire, there are currently two types of council delivering services (although parish and town councils also operate in some areas):

- District/borough councils provide services such as social housing and homelessness support, leisure services, town planning, street cleansing, waste and recycling collections, community and cultural centres, and council tax and business rates collection.
- The county council is responsible for services including children’s social care, education (including special educational needs), libraries, highways, recycling centres, public health and trading standards

Under the Government’s plan, these councils will be replaced by new unitary councils that will deliver all services currently provided by the county council and the district/borough councils.

Following a series of engagement events for residents and stakeholders, plus an online survey, Hertfordshire's 11 councils, together with the Police and Crime Commissioner, submitted proposals for two, three and four unitary council models for the Government to consider.

Full details of the three proposals, including business cases, financial analysis, maps showing the proposed boundaries, and a link to the Government’s consultation are available at: www.hertfordshire-lgr.co.uk

Paper copies of the Government’s consultation will also be available in council receptions and in Hertfordshire libraries. The Government’s consultation will close on 26 March 2026.

National recognition for Hertfordshire County Council’s pioneering tool to support adults with learning disabilities

Hertfordshire County Council has been shortlisted for a Municipal Journal (MJ) Achievement award in the Innovation in Reducing Health Inequalities category for its pioneering frailty risk assessment tool.

The innovative approach taken by the county council allows social care teams to collaborate with adults with learning disabilities and the people who know them best to assess the risk of frailty from the age of 18 rather than 65, when it is usually assessed.

The tool measures risk across a range of areas including physical health, hospital admission rates, support needs, and likelihood of a fall and determines a rating of mild, moderate, or severe. The council’s social care teams can then make necessary onward referrals, adjust care plans, and implement interventions to proactively reduce risk, improve health outcomes, and protect independence.

Hertfordshire County Council has been shortlisted for two prestigious national awards for its innovative work to help more people live more independently for longer and improve support for carers.

The Connect and Prevent development programme was shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award in the Health and Social Care category and a Municipal Journal (MJ) Achievement award in the Digital Transformation category.

The shortlisted programme is designed to ensure older and disabled adults receive the support they need as early as possible, devising and implementing innovative new ways to prevent, delay and reduce the need for long term care, helping people to live full and independent lives.

As well as providing better outcomes for people the programme has helped tackle rising demand and cost pressures in adult social care which is projected to save the county council £24.8m.

When data showed that strains and stresses on unpaid carers were leading to carer breakdowns that put extra demand on social care services, Hertfordshire County Council teamed up with Newton to work on a solution using advanced analytics.

The result is an artificial intelligence (AI) model that uses what we know about carers to identify those that might be at risk of reaching crisis. This enables Hertfordshire County Council and its partners to proactively reach out to carers offering personalised support and guidance, improving their wellbeing, maintaining personalised care for those they support, and reducing social care pressure.

The county council's Adult Care Services worked closely with carers, frontline workers, and community partners to design a collaborative and connected system with unpaid carers at the centre. As a result, over 250 carers have already been positively impacted by the programme, reporting improvement in feelings of resilience and wellbeing following practical advice and wellbeing checks.

Free bus travel scheme announced for care experienced young people

Hertfordshire County Council has announced it will fund free bus travel for young adults, 18-25, who have previously been in its care.

Around 1,000 young people are expected to benefit from the scheme, which will launch in early March and be trialled for 12 months. The scheme will utilise the existing Intalink App to provide a 100% discount on Intalink Connect Tickets, which allows unlimited travel on all buses in Hertfordshire (and some points beyond).

This news comes as councillors agreed to extend an existing council tax support scheme for care leavers, which will raise the age that care leavers will get council tax reimbursed to them from 21 to 25, at a meeting of Full Council on Tuesday 17 February. This and the launch of the council's new [corporate parenting strategy](#) highlights a commitment to those children and young people currently in our care and how the council plans to continue to help them as they enter adulthood.

Hertfordshire pledges support to Ukraine with new aid truck on anniversary of conflict

On the four-year anniversary since the conflict in Ukraine began, Hertfordshire County Council have reaffirmed its commitment by coordinating humanitarian aid being sent to Ukraine.

The articulated lorry, containing medicines, warm clothing, food and much more, is destined for the Sumy region in the north-east of Ukraine.

The truck is the 14th such aid truck sent by volunteers at Herts Fullstop within the county council, alongside partners. This time it will be sent to Sumy Regional Government, in the north-east of the country, with whom the council have developed a relationship.

Air Quality Consultation Hertfordshire County Council is inviting residents, community partners, businesses, and stakeholders to help shape a healthier air future for the county as launches a public consultation on its draft Air Quality Strategy.

Despite improvements in emissions from vehicles and other sources in recent years, poor air quality remains the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, contributing to around 30,000 deaths each year in England. Short bursts of high pollution can cause immediate health issues, while long term exposure harms our lungs and heart. Air pollution affects everyone, especially children, older adults, and people with underlying conditions. In Hertfordshire we want every resident to thrive with support for those most in need.

In late 2024, the Council engaged with residents across the county to understand the air quality issues that matter most to them. Their feedback has shaped a newly drafted strategy that sets out the county's direction for tackling air pollution and protecting public health in the years ahead.

Find out more about the consultation and have your say at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/AirQuality26

94 per cent of children have been allocated a place at one of their preferred secondary or upper schools by Hertfordshire County Council.

Applications are slightly down compared to last year with 14,519 applications for Hertfordshire children. 78 per cent gained a place at their first preference school.

Allocations for secondary and upper schools for September 2026, were released, Monday 2nd March.

The number of applications has remained high with 14,519 applications received for Hertfordshire pupils, just 1.25% (184 applications) fewer than last year. In total, including out-county applicants, 18,240 applications for Hertfordshire schools were received, again slightly less than last year when 18,445 applications were processed. Satisfaction rates have remained high, with 94.57% of Hertfordshire children offered a ranked school for 2026, almost the same as last year, 94.42%. The percentage of children offered their first-ranked school is higher than last year, at 78.17%, compared to 76.62% previously.

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster, March 2026

COUNCILLOR ACTIONS ARISING

Cllr Tom Payne

- HWMH. Discuss with HWMH Chairman: management requirements; ongoing storage of PC documents;
- Allotments (with Cllr Carrie Payne)
- Gilston development
- Blounts Lane S&V study – liaise with Cllr Eric Buckmaster and parishioner and contact Police & Crime Commissioner to see if grant funding is available
- Contact Sovereign Play re warranty on disintegrating swing seat
- Monitor play area risk items in RPII report (with Cllr John Andreotti)
- Remove and dispose of plant holder at corner of play area
- Remove and dispose of bin at the Coffee Lounge

Cllr John Andreotti

- HTC liaison
- Car park liaison
- Monitor play area risk items in RPII report (with Cllr Tom Payne)
- Attend Police community engagement
- Arrange yellow lining for car park

Cllr Carrie Payne

- Monitor Highways issues, including parking
- Allotments (with Cllr Tom Payne)

Cllr Jacqueline Jackson

- Footpaths, Public Rights of Way and accessibility matters
- Attend the next Police Cross Border meeting and report back to Council
- Follow up co-option prospects

Clerk

- Set up agreed bank payments
- Planning comments
- Hall booking for next meeting
- Website updating and email changes to .gov.uk
- Order portaloos for Scarecrow Festival
- Add Fireworks Code and policy to website
- AGAR 2025/26 arrange Internal Audit, including Assertion 10 compliance
- Add Christmas tree to September agenda

ALL

- Seek to find co-optees to fill vacancies
- Set up councillor .gov.uk email addresses