

**CUDDINGTON ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING****Draft Minutes of Annual Village Meeting  
held in The Bernard Hall  
Monday 22nd April 2024 at 7.00pm****Chair:** Lorraine Stevens, **Clerk:** Venetia Davies. **Attendance:** 60 Villagers

Lorraine Stevens (LS), Chair of Cuddington Parish Council welcomed attendees to the Annual Village Meeting (AVM). She reminded the village that the AVM is an occasion for everyone to hear about Cuddington's various clubs, societies, and associations and to raise any concerns and importantly, ideas for the future. Lorraine summarised the activities of the Parish Council for 2023/24 saying that much of the work this year had been dedicated to road safety projects and footpaths. Plans were underway for further footpath enhancements; a tree survey has been commissioned for trees on Parish land and the CPFA lease was completed. The Parish Council has retained the same Precept (£39,000) for the past three years. Lorraine welcomed new and old parishioners to the village and took the opportunity to thank Glen and Tracey, landlords of the Crown PH, who will be leaving the pub this coming weekend. She thanked them for their support of village activities through regular fundraising initiatives which has included funds for the iconic rocking horse in the children's playground. She wished them the best of luck and welcome new landlord, Aaron Swaine, who said he will be continuing Glen and Tracey's efforts to keep the pub going and hope to welcome everyone there. Lorraine wished him every success.

**1. Apologies**

Andrew Hughes and Charles Sanderson.

**2. Minutes of previous Annual Village Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Minutes were accepted as a true record and signed by Lorraine Stevens, Chair.

**3. Matters Arising****ACTION: CLERK to agenda new mirror at crossroads, outside Crown PH.****4. Written Reports**

Reports were circulated and included:

- Bernard Hall Committee and Village Picture House – Rob Morris Jones, Chair**

Bernard Hall usage continued to grow in 2023 as compared with 2022 but have not yet reached pre-Covid levels. The best-known activity is the weekly Village Picture House ("VPH") films and National Theatre performances from September through to July. Cuddington Youth Drama ("CYD") continue to use the Hall every Saturday during the School term and put on performances at least once a year. The Sunshine Club uses the Hall for their periodic film performances and starting in 2023 there are now twice weekly yoga classes on Mondays and Fridays. Finally, there are a few private parties but far less than there used to be prior to Covid. Financially the Hall made a profit of £2,213 in 2023 compared to a loss of £899 in 2022. In 2022 there had been a one-off expense of £4,800 required to repair a major fault on the projector and there were high utility costs in 2022 which came down in 2023. VPH audiences increased significantly in 2023 as compared with 2022 with revenues up 6.4%. Year to date 2024 sales have been down by 19% but this can be attributed to the strikes in the U.S. which means fewer really good films have been released. Last Autumn saw the 10th Anniversary of the Village Picture House. Since its first screening on 26th September 2013 – Othello with Adrian Lester – 221 films, 95 National Theatre Live plays, 10 other Plays, 12 rock and other music concerts, 7 musicals, 5 operas and a ballet have been shown. In all the Committee has sold just over 16,000 tickets an average of 45 tickets per event. The most popular films have been 1) Soul Boys of the Western World (the Spandau Ballet biopic) 2) One Life (with Sir Anthony Hopkins playing Sir Nicholas Winton and 3) Downton Abbey. The most popular "live theatre" events have been 1) War Horse 2) Fleabag and 3) Monty Python Live (Mostly). The village have a superb setup that is significantly better than other local community cinemas, with a huge screen, ten loudspeakers for full surround sound and an ultra-high-definition projector. Our regular patrons

2024/02a

come from as far away as Princes Risborough, Chinnor, Thame and Wheatley. The Committee, as always, is very grateful for the fantastic support from VPH front of house volunteers and special thanks to Jey and Sugi who sell tickets in the shop and provide refreshments in the Hall every week, and not forgetting the redoubtable Chris Long who all transform the Hall onto your Village Picture House. Finally, thanks to John Cooper who organises everything and without whom there would be no VPH! If anyone would like to join the FOH team please contact John Cooper or Chris Long. Rob thanked the Management Committee who has once again done a great job of running the Hall during the last year. Chris Lockett, Brian Woodford, Caroline Winnicott, Jessica Ecott, Charlotte Cooper, and Zoe Gibson have all made full contributions. Rob is very grateful for their support. Rob Morris-Jones Email: [robmojo65@hotmail.com](mailto:robmojo65@hotmail.com)

- [Parish Council Financial Report](#)  
Including Report and Income expenditure for 2023/24, Grants and Projects and Budget for 2024/25.
- **Nicholas Almond Cuddington UK (Register 237677) - Jennifer Schram de Jong**  
The Charity was founded in 1643. The Charity's trustees: Lorraine Stevens, new Chairman of the Parish Council, Canon Revd Phil Groves (replacing Revd Jonatan Hawkins), James Gibson and Jennifer Schram de Jong. All trustees will be put to the Parish Council for approval at their meeting in May. During the months of Covid, the Charity's grant giving business continued as normal but using the Internet rather than holding meetings. During the months of 2023, three grants were awarded. Income: £450.00 rent for the grazing of Poors Moor plus £162.50 from pub's quiz was received and £17.03 annual interest. The trustees look forward to receiving applications for grants at the end of the summer this year. Applications should be sent to *Mrs. Jennifer Schram de Jong at Larden, Spicketts Lane, Cuddington* by the applicants themselves and not their parents. Any queries should also be sent to Mrs. Schram de Jong or by telephone at 01844 291501.
- **Village Voice – Helen Keeping**  
A publication produced ten times a year and delivered to almost every home in the village (some people have opted to receive an electronic copy). There is no charge to any household. We are financially more secure than in the past due to generous support from two local companies: one in its second year of monthly advertising (insurance) and another in its first year (a butcher). This, in addition, to donations from some villagers, and annual grants, gives Village Voice certainty going forward. Whilst there are regular features, the team are always happy to welcome new ideas and one-off articles. It is a magazine for Cuddington. The team comprises Rachael Barnard, Kathy Hook, Helen Keeping and Erica Lowe.
- 5. **Buckinghamshire Council Local Plan and Cuddington Neighbourhood Plan – Ken Trew, Parish Councillor and lead on Planning.**  
Ken said that planning in the village is, as ever, changing as the Government changes, and with an Election later this year, it is difficult to know what is going to happen. As a result, Buckinghamshire Council's Local Plan, that was due to be finished, has been delayed. He pointed to the Bucks Local Plan Roadmap which outlines proposed progress. He said it would be premature to pre-judge what it means for the village but information would be circulated to the village as soon as it is available. The Cuddington Neighbourhood Plan was adopted two years ago and gives more weight to planning applications, subject to permitted development which is outside planning permission. Ken said that sometimes the Parish Council isn't consulted at all about these changes but there is nothing the PC can do about that. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan, the village was asked what they wanted to see in terms of highways and safety. The Parish Council has taken these ideas using consultants for their technical support. As below, the PC has been singularly unsuccessful with Buckinghamshire Highways and Thames Valley Police.

## 6. Road Safety Projects

- **Dadbrook Footpath**

Following the approval of the scheme for a safe grass verge from Buckinghamshire Council, the Parish Council commissioned a topographical survey and concept design to test the feasibility of the footpath project but were unable to get the approval of the landowner. The project is therefore now considered to be unachievable in the short term. There will be another opportunity to pursue this objective through the Bucks Local Plan process in relation to the housing proposals at Dadbrook Farm.

- **HGV control zone - Waddesdon Freight Zone**

A report on the informal engagement survey results and comments received is being prepared for the Cabinet Member for Transport to enable him to make a decision on how to proceed. This paper, due at the end of April, will help determine if adjustments to the proposal presented are needed and if this is something to pursue or not. Ashley Waite (Bucks Councillor) advised that the project is likely to go ahead which is good news for the village.

- **20mph for Cuddington.**

The Parish Council has commissioned an independent 20mph study. The consultant, PJA, has discussed their findings with Buckinghamshire Highways who continue to object to any 20mph proposals on the grounds that a) there is no 'safety case' for change i.e. there is no record of accidents as a result of speeding and b) the police would not enforce the lower speed limit. The consultant's report recommendations include a number of 'light touch' traffic calming measures e.g. re-doing the dragons teeth and coloured surfacing at the approaches to the village, installing village 'gateways' etc to emphasise the residential nature of the roads. The Parish Council has discussed this work with the local Buckinghamshire Highways technician in order to draw up a programme and budget for implementation. It is proposed to maintain the Speedwatch programme and install three permanent Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS) at the approaches to the village. The older devices on Aylesbury Road and Dadbrook are beyond repair and will be removed.

[The consultant's \(PJA\) 20mph final report can be found here.](#)

- **30mph extension/40mph transition**

The Parish Council had requested an extension of the 30mph limits to the village. Buckinghamshire Highways undertook speed surveys that showed average speeds to be around 45mph at the approaches to the village. The police and Buckinghamshire Highways objected to the proposed changes. Highways were then asked to consider a 40mph transition and this was also rejected even though it met the enforcement criteria of the police.

- **A418/Kings Cross Junction**

Chearsley, Cuddington and Haddenham Parish Councils jointly commissioned an independent road safety study for Kings Cross which included an assessment of pedestrian safety when crossing the A418. Whilst it has been established the junction is unsafe and the revamping of the junction is relatively simple, there are no monies to improve it. It is proposed to review the junction capacity/design during the Bucks Local Plan consultation stage when, almost inevitably, there will be more housing development in Haddenham. Pressure will be put on developers to improve the junction as part of the redevelopment of Haddenham.

[The consultant's \(PJA\) road safety final report can be found here.](#)

The meeting discussed 20mph in Oxford and the different views of different authorities, a village petition, and the softer 'architecture' touches to reduce the overall mean speed. Junction lining at King's Cross was suggested as a matter of urgency (This is currently being explored with Haddenham PC with a new round of HS2 funding). The meeting was also reminded of a county wide speed awareness campaign conducted approximately 20 years ago.

## 7. Buckinghamshire Council – Cllr Paul Irwin and Cllr Ashely Waite

The budget has been one of the toughest on record with escalating costs. They are four key areas: Children's social care, Adult social care, Home-to-school transport, and temporary accommodation. These account for 71% of a total budget of around £920 million. These are all regulatory items which means regardless of the cost or volume of users, Buckinghamshire Council has to provide the service. The budget is now balanced through to 2027. An extra £5 million has been released for road repairs. February was the wettest in 248 years. There is now 29 Gangs fixing the road. The cancellation of part of HS2 will release £8 billion back into road, but Buckinghamshire Council is unsure of what share it will get. The street works permit team has double fines for overstaying. Please continue to report issues on **Fix my Street**. An update was given on Community Boards (out of 16 Boards, Haddenham and Waddesdon Community Board has the highest level of contributory funding which is a measure of quality and sustainability of the projects delivered in the area), Environment, Helping Hands, Bernie, and initiatives, I'd like to borrow and I'd like a Bike. [Full report filed and available to view here.](#)

## 8. Traffic Action Group and SiD's - Steve Wright, Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator

- **Community Speedwatch** is a nationwide scheme where local people monitor the speed of vehicles passing through their community. The aim is not only to reduce speeding, but also to remind motorists of the speed limit and why it exists. The police dictate the number of people needed for all Speedwatch sessions, the exact position of each location and the minimum speed limit which may be recorded. In Cuddington, there are three locations – Bridgeway, Dadbrook and Aylesbury Road. Each monitoring session is usually one hour, with three volunteers - to count the number of vehicles passing in the agreed direction, to use the radar speed gun, and to take note of the registration numbers of those vehicles travelling at excessive speed. The vehicle details are then uploaded onto the police website, and letters sent out to the motorists concerned. Cuddington has collected a wealth of data about traffic passing through the village, though it is limited by the number of sessions undertaken by our volunteers. The table below compares data collected by local volunteers in 2022 and 2023. The number of sessions has dropped significantly, with a similar drop in the number of letters sent. There has however, been a drop in the max speed recorded, although the average speeder remains at 38mph. And for this year so far, a top speed of 49mph has been recorded by volunteers, with 79 letters sent by the police to speeding motorists.

|                                                        | 2022 | 2023 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| Number of one-hour volunteer sessions                  | 85   | 61   |
| Number of vehicles reported driving at excessive speed | 562  | 451  |
| Max speed, mph                                         | 54   | 48   |
| Average speeder, mph                                   | 38   | 38   |
| Excessive speed                                        | 14   | 12   |

- **SID (Speed Indicator Device).** Speed Indicator Devices (SiD's) accurately measure the oncoming vehicle's speed and displays this value to the driver. This is unmanned and data is collected 24/7. It supplies valuable information about the volumes and speeds of vehicles travelling on Aylesbury Road, Dadbrook and Bridgeway. Currently, the larger electric sign on Dadbrook is not working. Because of this, and the fact there is more of an issue with speed at this location, the SID has remained there for the past few months. There is currently only one SID. It is hoped to upgrade this shortly, to run off solar power rather than battery, and also acquire two further devices. Last year the Speedwatch team reported that at each of the locations, between 40-50% of ALL vehicles exceeded the 30mph speed limit. This has remained roughly the same in 2024. And just last week, 10 vehicles exceeded 50 mph, whilst a further 2 exceeded 60 mph. In conclusion, there is a lot of work to do. The team are

still looking for new volunteers for Community Speedwatch, so that they can provide a greater presence on the main roads through the village. Please contact Steve Wright if you require any further information on the statistics or wish to join the 'merry band' of volunteers. Training is provided. Steve Wright: 07989 383475, email [stepnwright@googlemail.com](mailto:stepnwright@googlemail.com). A Parishioner asked about the car registration display SID's. Another said that rather than letters from the Police it is 'points and fines' that make the difference. Steve said the letters help when people don't realise what speed they are doing and reiterated that the speed awareness campaign is to educate, rather than punish.

#### **9. Sunshine Club – Sherry Scott, Chair**

The Sunshine Club is for older people in the village and Sherry's report was that the Club goes from 'strength to strength'. The Club includes the cinema project where everyone is invited to attend (the films are stopped halfway through for a cup of tea!). The Club enjoyed a presentation and demonstration from the Hearing Dogs. Whilst the weather was terrible and only 30 people were expected, there were 50 people in attendance who helped raised lots of money for the Hearing Dogs. Friends, parents, and relations are invited to the meetings. Sherry thanked the huge amount of people that help with the Club, producing teas, helping with the cinema, etc and thanked the village for the support they receive. The Club is in funds and has coach trips planned to take members on outings. Friends and relations are invited.

#### **10. Cuddington School - Vicki Shenton, Chair of Governors (presented by Rob Morris Jones, who has recently become a Governor of the School)**

This has been another exciting and successful year for Cuddington and Dinton School, not least with the change of Head Teacher. After 13 years as a headteacher the school wished Mrs Kim Price a very happy retirement. The school has grown and thrived under her leadership and the village and church sent her off in style. Mrs Nicola Wilde the new Head Teacher, is no newcomer to the village, she started teaching at Cuddington School before it even merged with Dinton 19 years ago. Through a very rigorous interview process Mrs Wilde emerged as a standout leader against other external applicants, enabling her to step up from Deputy Head Teacher. The school is almost full with 181 students, being able to take slightly more pupils on the Junior site in Dinton, due to slightly larger classrooms. Many classes have waiting lists. The school were delighted to receive 88 applications for Reception places to start in September '24. Fortunately, the School is in a position to offer places to all pupils in its catchment area and those with siblings already at school. In January last year, the school welcomed an OFSTED visit, the purpose of the inspection was to check that the school remains good, (it was not possible to change the grading at this inspection). The staff and Governors were delighted with the outcome and the report. The inspection team clearly understood what is important at Cuddington and Dinton School. The opening to Ofsted's report said. *'Leaders and staff have high expectations and aspire for every pupil to 'let their light shine'. Pupils live up to these aspirations. They love learning, try their best and are thriving in this happy, village school. Pupils understand the importance of learning and know that this holds the key to future success in life.'* As with every year, the year six leavers go onto many different schools. This September children will be going to Waddesdon, Princes Risborough, Lord Williams's and the Aylesbury Grammar schools. The school were incredibly proud of last summer 2023 SATS results; notably 56% of pupils at the highest standards for Grammar and Punctuation; 50% of pupils at the highest standards for maths and 46% at the highest standard for reading. These results are significantly above both Buckinghamshire and the National levels. The school is committed to academic excellence and achievement for all. It strives to enable all children to achieve their full potential both in and out of the classroom. By working closely with the parents and the local community, the school endeavours to develop its pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills to prepare them for lifelong learning and skills needed to cope with the ever-changing world in which we live. As with every organisation the school has been under tremendous financial pressure, due mainly to growing energy bills, the pressure to support children with special educational needs and mental health requirements. Through careful financial management we are just managing to remain within budget. Despite being a small village school, it has an excellent provision for sports and proudly hold the Platinum Sports Award and were Bucks and Milton Keynes Sports school of the

year 2022/23. The culture of the school is that of continuously striving to improve, there is a growth mindset throughout the teachers, and senior leadership team, where they constantly reflect and review current practices. Having an open mind and benefiting from global sharing of educational best practices, means there are always new and better ways to help the children achieve. New practices are piloted within a year group, observed, tweaked and then shared across the school. The wrap-around childcare provision, and school led clubs, have been thriving for several years. This is testament of how the school listens to parents' requests and have adapted to their changing needs. The school continue to work hard to ensure they are good neighbours in the village, to overcome the never fading parking challenges, and be a real asset to the community.

#### **11. Footpaths – Andrew Hughes, Parish Councillor, and lead on Footpaths, read by Malcolm Thomas**

The Parish Council has developed a partnership we've developed with rRIPPLE, a group of volunteers charged with improving the path network around North Bucks to replace our network of ageing stiles with gates. Five have been replaced over the last year, one on footpath three which extends from Great Stone and two on footpath six, which goes east from the Sewage Work. There have also been two replaced between Cuddington and Cheersley. Replacing just one or two stiles here or there can have a big impact. Cuddington is blessed with some fantastic walks, and this work has already opened up a couple of fantastic two-mile walks for those that are less able to clamber over stiles. Work has gone a little quieter over the last 4 or 5 months where the weather has stopped progress. There are four more in the Parish Council's immediate sights. The PC will be replacing three stiles with two gates down towards Nether Winchendon and the Allotment Association has kindly given permission to replace the first two stiles as you walk from the road along footpath 8. Huge thanks to Bill Piers and his team from rRIPPLE who sadly couldn't be here, and also to the landowners who have given us permission to make this happen.

- With the summer season approaching, soon some of the paths will be overgrown; please email the Parish Council if you would like to be added to a list of volunteers that occasionally go out to maintain some of the paths.
- If you are friendly with a landowner and know that they have stiles in their fields, then please do ask them if they would be willing to have the Parish change it to a gate, completely free of charge.
- If you would like to pay for or donate a gate, and have a plaque dedicated to you or a loved one, then please do get in touch. They cost about £500 and we already had one stile earmarked for a generous resident but require the landowner's permission.

#### **12. Cuddington Fete – Rachael Bernard, Chair**

Last year's fete was a success all be it a wet one. The generous support from people, including Rectory Homes, meant the Fete started in profit. Now the Committee feel confident about this year's fete, they will seek further funding but the Committee are still looking for support and are actively trying to reach out to younger members of the community who have children who will be at the Fete. Rachael asked people to help spread the word through their various village what's app groups. This year's theme will be the Olympics. There will be a fancy dress parade starting on the lower green. There will be 30 stalls which will include more commercial stalls more 'snuggly' set out. More people are needed to help prepare, setup and put away. Rachael is joined by Ellen Dyer, Charlie Eckton and Emma Lear who has joined the tea as Treasurer. Lorraine said it was brilliant news to hear that the Fete was running - a real Cuddington institution!

##### **Diary Dates:**

- **Stall holders gathering - 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 3.30pm at the Playing Fields Clubhouse.**  
To check fete equipment, ask questions and enjoy a drink Ashley Waite kindly offered the use of gazebos and other equipment.
- **Fete Day - Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July from 1-4pm.**

**13. Cuddington Playing Fields Association – Charles Sanderson, Chairman read by Eman Parker**

The CPFA continues to be a great asset to the village. The use of the Club is steadily increasing including bookings made by people from outside the village. The finances of the CPFA have been run very efficiently and are sound. Over the last year members of the committee and the Club have been greatly involved in the organization of the Fete, Firework evening and the Village Fun Day. The Club is always looking for volunteers to help with the various activities run by the CPFA

**14. Best Kept Village (BKV) – Carol Hayward, BKV Judge**

The Parish Council is entering the Best Kept Village Competition and will be organising a litter pick towards the end of May. Carol Hayward, a judge for the BKV, introduced herself and her sister, Sharon, who is Vice Chair and also a judge. The competition has been going since 1957 and since entering in 1978, Cuddington has won 15 times, winning the Sword of Excellence seven times, and also winning the Community Award once. Carol stressed that the competition is an opportunity to celebrate the good work of all of the people who live in the village and make it attractive, for the residents and people who visit. Carol emphasised that is the importance of community involvement and conservation that matters. Carol said Cuddington has done exceptionally well over the years, as has Chearsley. Judges assess fresh floral displays (possibly under village signs), community facilities such as the village hall, bus stops, notice boards, church, cemetery, children's playing fields, general environment including hedges, verges, ditches, pond, areas around shops and pubs, war memorials and importantly evidence of community involvement and how the village is engaging the village in the competition through its website, facebook and Instagram pages. Carol said she was proud of Cuddington winning the Best Kept Village for 15 years but we need to win it again. Carol said that both her and Sharon are doing this in memory of their father, Jim Hayward saying Cuddington and the competition was his pride and joy.

**15. Biodiversity – Doug Kennedy**

Lorraine explained that Parish Council's now have a duty to have a Biodiversity Policy and that the Parish Council, with the help of consultant Doug Kennedy, adopted a policy at its March meeting. Doug Kennedy said that since WW2, England has become one of the most depleted biodiverse countries in Europe and the developed world. With the Environment Act 2021, the Government (Gove) created an ambition to turn things around. It has been a long process but has made farming more nature friendly. The Government has also introduced biodiversity net gain (BNG) as a condition to get planning permission for new development in England (if there is a loss of biodiversity for a building project over 9 houses, the developer will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain). Doug said that Buckinghamshire Council is in 'front of the game' and is sharing its work with other Councils. He recently attended the Twon and Parish Council Local Nature Recovery Strategies Stakeholder Engagement Workshop and has recommended the next steps in progressing the Council's biodiversity policy. Doug, previously a Parish Councillor, has conducted a bird survey for the last 13 years and there is a decline in songbirds. He said we have a very nice village – the Parish Council planting trees, taking care of trees, generally looking after verges (he asks that people do not park on the verges) and putting up nesting boxes. If there is an area that you think can be improved, please let Doug or the Parish Council know.

[The Parish Council's Biodiversity Policy can be read here.](#)

**16. Book Club – Amanda Carroll**

Book Worms meet monthly on a Wednesday evening at 8pm in the Cuddington Playing Field Clubhouse. It is a democracy, with no one running it. Members can read what they like and discuss. The bar is open. Everyone is welcome.

**Folk Night with Jamie Strachan and Doug Kennedy** – Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm at the Cuddington Playing Fields Clubhouse. Open bar.

**17. Closing Comment**

Lorraine thanked contributors and everyone for attending, and thanked Chirs Long for setting up the audio system for the meeting. She asked that villagers make any suggestions or comments to the

2024/08a

Parish Council and reminded everyone that the Parish Council meet on the **last Tuesday of the month** (excluding April). Lorraine thanked all on the Parish Council and said they were a great team.

The date for next year's Annual Village Meeting will be published in due course.

**Date and Time of Next Parish Council Meeting:**

**Annual General Meeting – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024 at 7.00pm in the Bernard Hall**