

ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 7.00pm in the Bernard Hall

Agenda and Contributor Reports

A meeting to celebrate local activities/achievements and debate current issues in the community.

1. Apologies
2. Approval of Minutes – 2024 Annual Village Meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. Contributions
5. Date and Time of Next Meetings:
 - AGM: Wednesday 7th May 2025 at 7pm in the Bernard Hall
(1st Wednesday in the month, due to Town and Parish Council Elections)
 - Annual Village Meeting 2026: Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 7pm in the Bernard Hall.

Bernard Hall Update including Village Picture House, Rob Morris-Jones, Chairman

Bernard Hall usage and income grew by 3% in 2024 compared with 2023. Activities taking place in the Hall included: Village Picture House (“VPH”). Films and National Theatre performances throughout the year with the exception of the summer holidays, Cuddington Youth Drama (“CYD”) use the Hall every Saturday with performances of taking place at least once a year, exercise classes, yoga 6pm every Monday, pilates 7am on Friday, Church Sunday School, monthly Parish Council meetings, private parties. Financially the Hall made a profit of £1,603 in 2024 compared with £2,160 in 2023. A grant of £1,000 was received from the Village Fete which was used to fund the purchase and installation of a TV screen.

Village Picture House. Thanks to Chris Long and John Cooper who organise everything and without whom there would no VPH! As always, we are very grateful for the fantastic support from our VPH front of house volunteers namely Gareth Anderson, Helen Keeping, Andy Luckett and Cathy Morris Jones. Also, we are very pleased that Carol Hayward has recently joined the Team. **If anyone would like to join the FOH team please contact John Cooper or Chris Long.** Since the beginning of the New Year there has been the return of NT Live productions with the hit shows The Importance of Being Earnest, Dr Strangelove and Macbeth. These attracted full or almost full houses. Unfortunately, the next two planned NTLive productions have been cancelled until later in the year, but we hope this is a blip and it will settle down to more regular NTLive screenings in the Autumn. Special thanks to Jey and Sugi who sell our tickets in the shop and provide refreshments in the Hall every week. The end of the very disruptive Writers Strike in the US is seeing an upturn in the number of films in production. However a significant number of these films are now funded by Netflix, Amazon and Apple are going directly to TV Streaming instead of cinemas. This may have a detrimental effect of what can be shown at the Hall in the future. The reinstatement of the “Kids Clubs” films at the end of each school term has been a big success. Moana 2 was recently shown at the end of the Spring Term. Three recent film showings Loving Vincent, The Critic and the Conclave (shown twice) have been watched by full houses. Thanks as always to the Management Committee (i.e. Charlotte Cooper, Caroline Winnicott, Jessica Ecott, Zoe Gibson, Chris Luckett and Brian Woodford) who make my job as Chairman very easy!

Cuddington Book Worms, Lorraine Stevens, Member

If you enjoy reading, please join Cuddington's Book Club, *Book Worms*, at our new venue of the Crown, on the **first Wednesday of the month**. You do not have to read a particular book but come and talk about what you have enjoyed reading yourself. We have an eclectic taste! Something for everyone. It's a great way to get good recommendations. All are welcome and we look forward to meeting new members to our Book Club. The next meeting is 7th May at 8pm.

Cuddington Fete, Ellen Dyer, Member of the Fete Committee

Thank you to everyone who took part in Cuddington Fete 2024, we raised an impressive £6435. Adding this to our reserve pot from the previous year meant that we were able to hand out £6585 in grants to village charities, societies, and the school. The breakdown was as follows:

- £285 The Village Voice – 3 editions of the Village Voice
- £500 The Sunshine Club – Coach Trip
- £1,000 St Nicholas Church – Towards a new flag pole, tree pollarding and a new gate
- £200 The Tuesday Group – Hire fees and craft materials
- £700 Village Fireworks – Annual event for villagers
- £400 The Nicholas Almond Trust – In recognition of Jennifer Schram de Jong and funding towards academic supplies for village pupils in higher education
- £1,000 Cuddington & Dinton CoE School – Towards refurbishment of the infant site playground incorporating a forest school
- £500 The Baptist Burial Ground – Towards a new wall
- £1,000 The Bernard Hall – Towards a new digital display screen
- £1,000 CPFA – Towards the new mower fund

Looking ahead to this year, Cuddington Fete will be on **Saturday 12th July** with the theme being Superheroes. We have the usual village stalls planned plus some new external providers joining us. It's a fantastic day which attracts a good turnout and raises vital funds for the village, we encourage everyone to get involved where they can. We still have a number of gaps to plug in terms of helpers on the day. ***Please sign up either by filling in your name on the helper sheet here at the village meeting, or by emailing cuddington.fete@gmail.com***. Specific gaps include, bottle tombola, pimms stall and stewards. Unfortunately, we are noticing fewer volunteers each year, we get it – people are busy, things change, people

move away etc. It may be that the village needs to decide if there is the appetite to keep this event going on a yearly basis. Should it continue next year, we will need new committee members, Ellen and Rachael were due to step down this year but due to lack of uptake in committee members, stayed on to keep the fete going for 2025. We have however been fortunate to add Edd to the team who is proving valuable already. For anyone wishing to learn more, please get in touch with the team.

Cuddington Parish Council, Lorraine Stevens, Chair

2024 has been another busy year for Cuddington Parish Council. Positive outcomes include:

- The replacement Stile program in collaboration with NB Ripple
 - New village gates installed on the village boundaries – the hope is that motorists will realise they are entering a settlement area and reduce their speeds
 - Planting bulbs at the junction of Holly Tree Land and Aylesbury Road- also has a positive impact on speeding
 - The Community Library – continues to thrive
 - Re-seeding the Wildflower areas on the Upper Green and in the Playing fields
 - Refurb of the Bus Shelters – thanks to Malcolm for replacing the rotten wood and repainting the shelters
 - The bollards on the Upper Green are to be replaced with wooden bollards – work is to commence soon
 - Replacement of the Mirror on the Crossroads
 - Winning the Morris Cup for the Best Kept Village competition
 - Preparation of a Biodiversity Policy (link below). All PC Policies are available on the Parish Council section of the Cuddington website.
- Many thanks to Doug Kennedy and Ken Brown.

There have been a few negative aspects – the Speed signs were stolen and tampered with – all have been replaced and are working thanks to Steve Wright. There was also damage around the village – including the fence at Tibby's Lane which the landowner has replaced. A couple of our villagers were involved in a hit and run accident on the Churchway side of the King's Cross crossroads. Best wishes to Ruth and Chris for a speedy recovery. The PC have several ongoing projects and are looking into replacement metal signs with wooden ones as Chearsley have recently done. The PC continue to lobby our MP for better network coverage for mobile phones.

The PC are consulted on planning applications within the village. If you do make a comment, please would you cc in the Parish Clerk.
Buckinghamshire Council Planning Portal is no longer publishing comments on their website although they may appear in the final documents. A Financial Report detailing expenditure in 2024-25, grants and projects received and planned expenditure for 2025-26 will be given at the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council, 7th May 2025.

Biodiversity, Doug Kenndy, Parish Council Consultant (Biodiversity)

The Parish Council's biodiversity policy can be viewed here:

<https://www.cuddingtonvillage.com/page-content/documents/1741190778-08%20CPC%20-%20%20BIODIVERSITY%20POLICY.pdf>.

The [River Thame Conservation Trust](#) is taking part in The Big Give Green Match Fund 2025, and for one week only – from 22nd to 29th April – every pound you give through our campaign page will be matched, doubling your impact at no extra cost to you – meaning *any donation to River Thame Conservation Trust will go twice as far*.

https://donate.biggive.org/campaign/a05WS0000028nqPYAQ?mc_cid=84d637bea6&mc_eid=abef343511. The Trust has hundreds of people working across the River Thame catchment to restore and protect the river and its tributaries.

Cuddington's Footpath Project, Andrew Hughes, Parish Councillor

As many of you know we have an ongoing project to replace stiles with gates to make the many footpaths surrounding the village more accessible. Since the last meeting we have installed two gates on the route towards Nether Winchendon, and more recently on the path through the allotments. This wouldn't be possible without the incredible volunteers at rRIPPLE, led by Bill Piers, who have contributed a huge amount of time, energy, and money to make this happen. And of course, the respective landowners who we are incredibly grateful for their support as well. We hope to continue this project over the next 12 months, so if you are friends with any of the landowners for the remaining stiles in the immediate vicinity of the village, please do mention that we remain ready, willing and able to install new gates. There aren't too many left now, and we've opened up some amazing round routes that hopefully many of you are enjoying. We are also turning our attention to see if there are solutions to improve the

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drainage on the bridal way, which can be tricky to navigate for many months of the year and will provide an update through the monthly PC meetings.

Planning, Ken Trew, Parish Council Consultant (Planning)

The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 12th December 2024. The below provide a summary of the main changes proposed and what they mean for Buckinghamshire, and the implications on our five-year housing land supply.

- **Housing target.** Homes needed under new government formula December 2024 Houses per year is 4,319. Total houses needed in Local Plan period (2024-2045) is 90,699. Average number of new homes built in Buckinghamshire a year over last 2 years (2022/21–2023/24) was 2,907.
- **Buckinghamshire Council's Local Plan.** The updated LDS outlines the new timeframe for the development of a Local Plan for Buckinghamshire with an aim of submitting it for independent examination by December 2026, meeting the government's deadline for preparing Local Plans under the current plan-making system. Under the new timeline, **key consultation and feedback on the draft Local Plan will take place in September 2025**, giving residents the opportunity to comment. Based on experience of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), it will be very difficult to influence matters once the Local Plan goes to Examination for assessment by a Planning Inspector. The final Local Plan would be submitted in December 2026, after which a period of examination will take place. The expectation is that the plan would be adopted at the end of 2027. **Useful Link:** Planning in Buckinghamshire: <https://www.jjdesign.org.uk/news-updates/planning-in-buckinghamshire/>
- **Call for sites.** As part of the plan's preparation, a 'call for sites' exercise is currently taking place (12 March for 6 weeks and will close on 23 April 2025). This call for sites helps gather a fuller understanding of the land available for development within Buckinghamshire.
- **Cuddington Neighbourhood Plan (CNP).** Neighbourhood Development Plans gain full planning weight as part of the 'development plan' when they pass the referendum. Once 'made',

the NDP is a material planning consideration in the application decision making process and must be appropriately considered when planning applications are being determined. Whilst there is no requirement for a proposed development to accord with the NDP, Officers will set out in the planning report any relevant other factors or other planning considerations that outweigh the need for the proposal to be compliant with an NDP. There will be no need to formally update CNP until after the Bucks Local Plan is adopted. However, preliminary work could start once the Draft Local Plan has been submitted for Examination in December 2026.

- **Dadbrook verge/footway and safety assessment of the Kings Cross junction.** The Dadbrook footway and Haddenham safety junction will be considered at the consultant stage of Draft Local Plan and Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) to be published in September 2025 for consultation.
- **One Uniform.** The Planning Portal (known as Public Access) is to undergo some changes in April/May. **Comment on or object to a planning application.** Public comments on planning applications are no longer published on Public Access. This change is to protect personal information under GDPR rules. It is understood that people can still share their views on planning applications, and these will be considered when making decisions. The planning process remains the same, and decision-makers will still see all comments, which will be summarised in the officer's report. Comments from official consultees like Highways, Town and Parish Councils, and the Environment Agency will still be published on Public Access (subject to GDPR). The Parish Council will no longer be able to see if residents have objected to any planning. This has been a useful guide of the strength of local feeling. Residents are urged to copy any comments to the Parish Council.

Traffic Action Group, Steve Wright, Speedwatch Co-ordinator.

Community Speedwatch is a nationwide scheme where local people monitor the speed of vehicles passing through their community. 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 2023/4 and 2024/5. The number of sessions has again dropped significantly, with a similar drop in the number of letters sent. We are struggling to get the 'magic number' of three volunteers in order to undertake a session.

	2023/24	2024/5
Number of one-hour volunteer sessions	61	13
Number of vehicles reported driving at excessive speed	451	52
Max speed, mph	48	47
Average speeder, mph	38	38
Excessive speed	12	2

And for this year so far, a top speed of 47mph has been recorded by volunteers, with 9 letters sent by the police to speeding motorists. SID (Speed Indicator Device). Speed Indicator Devices accurately measure the oncoming vehicle's speed and display this value to the driver. Last April saw the delivery of two new SIDs, powered by solar panels, which have been permanently located on Aylesbury Road and Bridgeway. The original device, situated on Dadbrook also received a solar panel. These changes meant that our SIDs now work 24/7 covering all three main roads into the village. However, July saw the SID and solar panel on Dadbrook stolen, along with the batteries for the other two. Replacements were supplied, and they were all back up and running by December. Future improvements are the installation of three more poles so that we can temporarily move our SIDs to new locations facing outgoing traffic. Research up and down the country has indicated that making the SIDs more mobile improves their effectiveness. In conclusion, there is a lot of work to do. We are still looking for new volunteers for Community Speedwatch, so that we can provide a greater presence on the main roads through the village. As always, please contact me if you require any further information on our statistics or wish to join our merry band of volunteers - stepnwright@googlemail.com Training is provided.

WhatsApp Community – Louise Butler, Parish Councillor

WhatsApp Community - keeping our village safe and connected. This initiative was borne out of a need to engage with everyone in real time for Neighbourhood Watch. It's more inclusive and accessible for everyone to join as it is a Community, we can include as many groups as we want. You do not need to belong to all the groups – just join the ones you are interested in. There is the ability to mute if needed! If you wish to set up a Group, (e.g. Fete, Picture House, Village tidy Clubhouse which maybe benefit from this) make a request on Whatsapp and we can set up. We ask that anyone wanting a group becomes an Admin. Please join here:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/KtOOangtkkaLmmABeAJ0rA>

Cuddington Playing Fields Association, Ellen Dyer, Treasurer

Cuddington Playing Fields Association (CPFA) is the team behind the running of the playing fields and the clubhouse. Each year we ensure that we raise enough money to cover all that is needed to keep the field and clubhouse well maintained. It's done mainly though profit raised by the bar, but we also fundraise and apply for grants. This year, thanks to Malcolm Thomas we successfully applied for a grant to help us with the cost of a new mower. The Football Foundation kindly donated us 75% of the cost, with the CPFA fundraising the rest. Our finances are healthy but overheads increase every year so we encourage all villagers to get involved where they can, be it using the bar, hiring the clubhouse or helping us to fundraise. Please do speak to one of the team if you can help out. We are keen to add new committee members. It's not an onerous task if enough people get involved. The bar operates as a members club, the license being a Club Premises Certificate. This means users must be a member or be signed in by a member. Annual memberships are £15 for a family, £10 individual or £5 for concessions. Signing in non-members costs £1 each. Please help us comply with the terms of our licence by adhering to these requirements. In previous years, despite it being a village run event, members of the CPFA have taken it upon themselves to run the firework night at the Playing Fields. This year, no one from the CPFA has put themselves forward to take charge of this. Therefore should the village wish to have this event, it will need a new organising team. The previous organisers will pass on resources and information as needed.

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Cuddington and Dinton School, Vicki Shenton, Chair of Governors

Under the leadership of our Headteacher, Mrs Nicola Wilde, Cuddington and Dinton Church of England School has continued to thrive. We currently have 180 children on roll, with 7 of our 9 year groups at capacity. The school is committed to academic excellence and achievement for all, which starts with creating a kind, caring, and calm environment. This year, through a very collaborative exercise involving the children, staff, and governors, the school updated its values. The new school values we agreed on are: resilience, curiosity, kindness, and integrity. These are underpinned by our continued close partnership with the church. "Let your light shine" (Matthew 5:16) remains central to all that we do as a Christian school community. As with all schools, Cuddington and Dinton School continues to face financial challenges due to rising energy costs and the need to support children with special educational needs and mental health requirements. For example, we fund a counsellor to come into school and work with those children who need extra support. However, with careful budgeting, we are managing to stay financially stable. Governors are grateful for the support received from Oxford Diocese, Friends 4CaDS (our PTA) and both Dinton and Cuddington School House Trusts. We are also grateful to our new caretaker, who continuously goes above and beyond. You may have seen him around the village during the school holidays overseeing the new installation of the Forest School.

Since COVID, school attendance has been a challenge nationally and is often seen in the headlines. I am pleased to report that our attendance meets the threshold and is higher than both national and Bucks averages. One of the things I am most proud of is that the governors and staff are committed to continuous improvement, with a growth mindset permeating throughout the school. New educational practices are constantly being piloted, observed, and shared to ensure the best outcomes for our students. Summer 2024 we enjoyed academic success. Foundation stage was ranked on the 96% percentile for the number of pupils achieving a 'good level of development'. This was a fantastic achievement and hopefully a sign we are moving on from children disaffected by Covid. Our Year 1 pupils secured an 85% pass rate for their phonics screening assessment, again well above the national average. Our highest attaining Year 6 pupils achieved significantly above average: Reading 48% achieved the highest level (compared to 28% national); Maths 91% were working at an expected level (compared with 73% national) and for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling 65% achieved the highest level (compared with a

national average of 32%). School is currently busy preparing for this year's assessments whilst making sure children receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Our year six leavers go on to many different schools. This year, more than half the class passed their 11+, and we have 12 children going to Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School. This September, children will also be going to Waddesdon, Princes Risborough, Lord Williams, and Aylesbury High School for girls. We strive to enable all children to achieve their full potential both in and out of the classroom. We are part of the Thame Partnership and offer staff and children many opportunities through this collaboration. In addition, we have excellent provision for sports and proudly hold the Platinum Sports Award. The introduction of innovative extracurricular activities such as nature club, art clubs, football and netball, chess club and computer programming (Scratch) has been well-received, providing students with diverse opportunities to explore their interests. Our wrap-around school clubs remain popular, and we are constantly adapting to meet the changing needs of parents and the community. Education is a partnership between parents, carers, the school, the church, and the local community. We are working hard to address parking challenges and improve communication with parents and villagers. We are proud of the progress we have made and look forward to another successful year at Cuddington and Dinton School.

Nicholas Almond Trust, Lorriane Stevens, Secretary and Treasurer

I would like to begin by paying tribute to the late Jennifer Schram de Jong. For many years Jennifer was the Secretary and Treasurer of the Trust which provides grants to students and apprentices who live in Cuddington and are continuing in further education. Jennifer worked incredibly hard to maintain the Trust and she will be sorely missed. Two other Trustees, Reverend Jonathan Hawkins and James Gibson also resigned after many years' services to the Trust. I thank them for their contribution. The four Trustees are now Canon Dr Reverend Phillip Neil Groves – Chair, Zoe Gibson, Karen Clayton and Lorraine Stevens – Secretary and Treasurer. This year we had four applicants for grants – two new applications and two applications applying for second payments. All of which we were able to fulfill. Our sole income is from rent on Poors Moor – a land locked field on the Gibson's farm. This year our income was boosted by a grant from the Fete Committee and compensation from NatWest Bank for the poor service they provided when dealing with the changes to the signatories on the bank account. I would like to thank the Fete Committee for supporting

the Nicholas Almond Trust. I would also like to thank the current Trustees for their ongoing commitment to the Trust and its aims.

Village Voice, Helen Keeping, Editorial Team

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 local companies; and 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.

Buckinghamshire Council, Councillor Ashley Waite

Roads and Infrastructure. In a major effort to improve the county's road network, £120 million has been invested across 2,100 miles of roads. This includes drainage works such as cleaning around Fleet Marston Bridge and implementing the Lane Rental Scheme, which helps keep traffic flowing on the major routes. **HS2 Developments.** Despite some challenges, roadworks and closures related to HS2 have been mitigated over the last year. The A41 work is now nearing completion, with only minor tasks left to wrap up. The old A41 will soon be narrowed, and the realignment of Station Road is scheduled for this summer. **Development Boom.** Housing developments are booming with a 42% increase in homes, mainly in North Buckinghamshire. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) continues to guide local growth, with the Littleton Green Development project now at the planning stage. **Helping Hands: Support Across the County.** Our "Helping Hands" initiative remains active, providing support to residents across the county. From helping people access food through various schemes to offering energy-saving advice via the "Energy Doctor," we continue to assist those in need. We're also addressing rising energy and water costs, providing much-needed relief to vulnerable families. **Budget Breakdown.** The council tax was set at 4.9% which is lower than several neighbouring councils. Of the £1.2 billion budget, 77% (£924 million) has been allocated, leaving a balance of £276 million. The funding continues to be focused on the "Magic Four": Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Home to School Transport and Temporary Accommodation.

Key Projects. *I'd Like to Borrow:* Community Support Services Launched last year in Quainton, I'd Like to Borrow is Buckinghamshire's first "Library of Things" – a community-based tool and equipment lending service. It's designed to make home maintenance and improvement accessible to all, encouraging collaborative consumption, reducing waste, and lowering carbon emissions. It's all about strengthening community resources and helping people tackle projects without the need for expensive tool hire or purchases. *I'd Like A Bike.* A subsidiary of I'd Like to Borrow, I'd Like A Bike refurbishes donated bikes, providing them to low-income families and individuals transitioning out of the care system. This initiative ensures that transportation is accessible to those who need it most. *I'd Like A Bus* Formerly Bernwode Bus, this service provides essential transport for rural communities. We cater to a variety of groups, including the elderly, volunteers, schools, sports clubs, and youth clubs, ensuring everyone has access to the transport they need. North Bucks Food Drive Part of I'd Like to Borrow, the North Bucks Food Drive collects food on the first Saturday of every month, with deliveries made to Aylesbury Vineyard. These collections help address food insecurity, providing support to those in need throughout the community. Together, these projects showcase Buckinghamshire's commitment to community support, sustainable development, and improving the quality of life for all residents.