

CUDDINGTON ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

**Draft Minutes of Annual Village Meeting
held in The Bernard Hall**

Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 7.00pm

Chair: Lorraine Stevens, **Clerk:** Venetia Davies. **Attendance:** 64 Villagers

Lorraine Stevens (LS), Chair of Cuddington Parish Council, opened the 2026 Annual Village Meeting and welcomed both long-standing and new residents. She noted that the meeting was not a Parish Council meeting and reminded attendees that these take place on the **fourth Wednesday of each month**. Leaflets containing full contributor reports were provided on chairs. LS introduced the Parish Councillors, Louise Butler, Andrew Hughes, Malcolm Thomas, and Ken Brown, Vice Chair, and gave apologies from Ravern Stevens. A central focus of this year's Annual Village Meeting was the outstanding contribution of volunteers. Lorraine thanked past and present volunteers for their input into village life and noted the newly formed Crown Management Committee - the latest addition to the village's volunteer groups. Lorraine invited parishioners to stay for refreshments at the end of the meeting. An appeal was also made for volunteers to support Rachael Barnard (rachael.cb@btinternet.com) and Helen Keeping (wichertcot@gmail.com) with *Village Voice*.

1. Apologies

Cllr Ravern Stevens and Buckinghamshire Councillor, Greg Smith, Graham and Fiona Carr.

2. Minutes of previous Annual Village Meeting held on 7th May 2025

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

3. Matters Arising

There were none.

4. Contributor Reports

Contributor reports were circulated and included the following. [Please click here for contributions submitted for this year's Annual Village Meeting.](#)

- Bernard Hall including Village Picture House, Rob Morris-Jones, Chairman
- Best Kept Village, Natasha Lee, Chair
- Crown Public House, Mike Cottman, Chair (Blue Sky
- Cuddington Book Worms, Lorraine Stevens, Member
- Cuddington Fete, Emma Lear, Member of the Fete Committee
- Cuddington Parish Council, Lorraine Stevens, Chair
 - Biodiversity, Doug Kennedy, Parish Council Consultant (Biodiversity)
 - Buckinghamshire Council, Dr Maru Mormina, Councillor
 - Planning Ken Tree, Parish Council Consultant (Planning)
 - Traffic Action Group, Steve Wright, Speedwatch Co-ordinator
 - WhatsApp Community, Louise Butler, Parish Councillor
- Cuddington and Dinton School, Vicki Shenton, Chair of Governors
- Nicholas Almond Trust, Lorraine Stevens, Secretary and Treasurer
- Cuddington Playing Field Association, Charles Sanderson, Chair
- Cuddington Sunshine Club, Angela Wenham, Member
- Cuddington Tennis Club, Chris Carey, Chair
- Village Voice, Helen Keeping, Editorial Team

5. Speakers

- **Cuddington Playing Field Association, Charles Sanderson, Chair.** Charles noted that the CPFA continues to be a valued village asset, run on behalf of the Parish Council at no cost to it. A big vote of thanks was given to Malcolm Thomas for his work managing the bar - the income that sustains the Club. Membership is required to use the bar, and parishioners were encouraged to join.

Key activities included Firework Night, run independently by Patrick and Charlie McBeth; increased youth involvement led by Chris Carey; and growing use of the boules area and weekend activities. From small beginning, the Folk Evening continues to grow, with attendance from neighbouring villages as well as locals. A new mower, thanks to Malcolm Thomas, was purchased with support from a £36,000 FA grant, a £3,000 Parish Council contribution, and funds from the old mower. Additional income comes from renting out the football pitch and Malcolm has received a further grant to support this. Thanks were given to Carol for her valued support as CPFA secretary.

- **Cuddington Parish Council, Lorraine Stevens, Chair.** Lorraine Stevens summarised the Parish Council's activities as set out in the Contributor Report and gave updates on the Footpath Project and stile replacements, the Best Kept Village initiative, and the Trees Management and Maintenance programme. Thanks were given to Malcolm and Charlie McBeth, as well as to residents Simon Brown for village green and verge cutting and to Neal Waters for grass cutting in the children's playground. LS invited suggestions for future topics for the Community Forum. She confirmed that the Parish Council precept remains at £39,000 for the fourth consecutive year. Donations this year supported Churchyard grass-cutting, the Poppy Appeal, the purchase of a Tommy Statue, and a contribution to the Tennis Club. An appeal was made for anyone interested in becoming a Parish Councillor to please come forward. The next Best Kept Village Tidy Day will take place on Saturday 16th May and is being held in conjunction with Children's Gardening Week. Lorraine asked for donations of flowers - lorraine.stevens@cuddington-bucks-pc.gov.uk
- **Biodiversity, Doug Kennedy, Parish Council Consultant.** In response to long-term declines in local wildlife and habitat quality, Doug invited volunteers to form a Cuddington Biodiversity Team. He outlined historic loss of meadows, soil degradation, pressure on waterways and reduced bird species recorded through the Vertebrate Watch. He noted growing national and local momentum for nature recovery, including the Bucks Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Smarter Catchment funding for the River Thame and supportive local landowners. Doug suggested establishing a core group to identify opportunities and lead community action offering to help in any way he can. Interested residents to contact Doug - doug@doug-kennedy.com or the Parish Council - clerk@cuddington-bucks-pc.gov.uk. He also highlighted the upcoming **Vertebrate Watch** on weekend of 9th and 10th May and encouraged additional volunteers, particularly for the allotments and Dadbrook areas. Doug reminded the audience that Folk Night takes place on Friday 24th April.
- **Buckinghamshire Council, Maru Mormina, Councillor.** Maru, who has now been in office for almost a year, emphasised the significant amount of time spent supporting residents with individual issues and her commitment to understanding local circumstances and concerns. Both she and Cllr Greg Smith have made a point of attending parish meetings and engaging with Parish Councillors. They plan to open up wider community conversations, inviting residents to contribute ideas that can be taken forward to Buckinghamshire Council as motions or questions. Residents were encouraged to join an upcoming webinar on the future of local public transport, with a follow-up drop-in session to be held at Haddenham Village Hall to brainstorm improvements to public transport in Buckinghamshire.
- **Planning, Ken Trew, Parish Council Consultant.** Ken provided an update on planning matters in Cuddington. Ken stressed that this is an important year with Buckinghamshire Council preparing its Draft Local Plan, which includes new housing allocations. During the earlier Call for Sites, land at Dadbrook Farm was submitted and is currently assessed by Buckinghamshire Council as having capacity for around 70 homes. The Parish Council has submitted comments questioning the need to release greenfield land and has also raised concerns about the expansion of development in Haddenham, creeping towards the A418 and Cuddington. Government housing targets must be met, and if they are not, the Government has powers to allocate sites themselves. The next stage of consultation is in July, and the Parish Council will circulate information to explain its implications. Since local leverage for site allocation and housing numbers is limited, the Parish Council will focus on infrastructure requirements and securing the best outcome for the village.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan will follow once the Local Plan position is clearer. A question was raised about housing types and whether more flats or apartments could be provided to increase density. It was noted that density ratios are applied once land is allocated, and in Haddenham some of the resulting homes will be flats.

- **Traffic Action Group, Steve Wright, Speedwatch Co-ordinator.** Steve reported an increase in speed watch activity this year, with the number of sessions doubling. Steve pointed to the Contributor Report which details additional facts and figures. More volunteers are still needed. Please get in touch here: stepnwright@googlemail.com. Steve also manages the village SIDs, with three devices now in use and three new poles installed. The SIDs will be rotated between locations to monitor and deter speeding motorists.
- **WhatsApp Community, Louise Butler, Parish Councillor.** Louise reported that the village WhatsApp Community - <https://chat.whatsapp.com/KtOOangtkalmmABeAJ0rA> - connects the village in real time and is continuing to grow. Several optional chat threads are now available, including Boules, CPFA, The Crown and General Announcements. Residents were encouraged to join to stay up to date with village news. Suggestions for new groups are welcome, with ideas including a Biodiversity Group and a Fete Committee. The WhatsApp Community currently has around 150 members.
- **Cuddington Tennis Club, Chris Carey, Chair.** Chris gave thanks to the committee, including recent new members. Over many years, the Club has carefully looked after its finances and now has around £40,000, enough to fund the new court surface, with additional support from the Parish Council. Future plans include raising funds for more energy-efficient lighting. Coaching will resume later in the year, starting with children's sessions, and the Club hopes the new surface will attract further interest. Membership among children aged 6–12 is growing. The Club is relaxed and friendly – you do not need to be a star payer to join! All residents are encouraged to come along - tenniscommittee271133@groups.outlook.com.
- **Cuddington Fete, Rachel Changer, Member.** The Fete will take place on **Saturday 11th July, 1–4pm**, with a theme celebrating **100 years of David Attenborough**, including a children's parade. Volunteers are needed both for setting up stalls and helping on the day - cuddington.fete@gmail.com. Last year's Fete raised £5,500 for local village causes. It is hoped that The Crown will be open for the event to add to the celebrations.
- **Cuddington Village Website, Chris Long, Editor.** Chris provided a history and update on the village website. The original aim of the website was for each organisation to have its own editor. The number of active editors has reduced and more are needed. Chris encouraged Groups and Societies to publicise village information on the website to reach those who do not use WhatsApp or Facebook. The site currently has around 400 registered users, including people from neighbouring villages. For the Fete pages, 195 subscribers have opted in to receive Fete updates. Chris explained that when new content is posted and the alert option is selected, all relevant subscribers receive a notification. He reassured the meeting that creating a website post is straightforward and similar to sending an email and that an Editor Guide is available. Anyone who has some HTML knowledge and is interested in becoming an Administrator was invited to contact Chris - chrisdglong@hotmail.com.
- **Bernard Hall and Village Picture House, Rob Morris, Chair.** Rob gave a brief summary of the report provided. Longstanding Chair of the Bernard Hall, Robert Spencer Bernard sadly passed away in January. In line with the conveyancing document of 1929, Robert's wife Georgianna will become the new chair and take up post on 8th June. The **Bernard Hall** usage and income increased by nearly 5% in 2025 compared with 2024. Regular users include the Village Picture House, Youth Drama, exercise classes, yoga, pilates, Church Sunday School, the Parish Council, and a number of private parties (fewer than in previous years).

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Financially, the Hall is in a strong position, with a profit of £4,062, which will be reinvested into the Hall. Maintaining a healthy reserve continues to be important. The **Village Picture House** has been running since September 2013, originally established through the initiative of Marcus Bolton. Since then, around 420 films have been screened. All surplus income is directed towards the upkeep of Bernard Hall. The last major upgrade took place in 2019 and a further upgrade is planned for this summer, focusing on improvements to the sound system. The Picture House benefits from an excellent Front of House team, and new volunteers are always welcome - robmojo65@hotmail.com. The Picture House relies heavily on the expertise of its Technical Manager, Chris Long - without whom the screenings simply wouldn't happen, and without the support of John Cooper, there wouldn't be a Village Picture House. Rob also paid thanks Jayen and Suji for providing refreshments, and to the wider team whose work makes Rob's job 'very easy indeed!'

- **Cuddington and Dinton School, Vicky Shenton, Chair of Governors.** The school continues to flourish, with strong academic outcomes; Vicky was '*most proud*' at the school's ongoing focus on improvement, not only in learning but in developing resilient, confident children. New initiatives include Open Play, encouraging pupils to build dens (reminiscent of the childhoods many in the audience had), take managed risks and develop independence. Since its introduction, incident numbers have reduced noticeably. The school has also refreshed its core values, with governors and staff working closely with pupils to embed these in daily school life. Praise was given to the governing body, and as Chair of Governors, Vicky expressed how proud she is of the work they are doing for the school.
- **Crown Public House, Mike Cottman, Chair.** An update was given on the community purchase of The Crown - <https://www.villagebluesky.com/>. Four key achievement steps were outlined:
 - Agreement from Fullers - Fullers confirmed on 17 February that they would sell.
 - Community Engagement - a packed village meeting demonstrated strong support.
 - Fundraising - the community raised £650,000 in 5.5 weeks, far exceeding expectations.
 - Finding a manager – Abi Armstrong is in place as Pub Operator.Following a cook-off, a professional chef has been unanimously selected and signed up. Progress now depends on completing several administrative steps. There are plans to install a new thatch ridge and there is a two-week refurbishment is planned, including kitchen rewiring, layout changes, new ovens and external improvements. A soft opening is expected mid-to late June, followed by a major launch event on 5 July with a marquee, (which will remain in place for Fete weekend). A QR code was provided for residents to access the [Help Shape the Future of Your Local Pub questionnaire](#). A proposed new pedestrian access through the existing Crown boundary wall was raised and will be considered, but is likely to be subject to planning and listed building consent.

Questions. Ken Birkby raised concerns about Buckinghamshire Council's continued refusal to introduce 20mph limits in Cuddington, noting that 70 out of 145 towns and cities have now adopted them, including areas within Thames Valley Police such as Oxfordshire. Ken expressed frustration that repeated representations from the Parish Council had been dismissed. He stressed his concern with increasing traffic from Haddenham's growth and ongoing issues with speeding, and HGVs damaging verges. He urged the Parish Council to keep pressing Buckinghamshire Council, describing the current inaction as indefensible. **ACTION: MM to revert on 20mph. Buckinghamshire Council is due to make an announcement on Freight Strategy/HGVs. MM to update.**

Closing Comment. Lorraine thanked all contributors and everyone who attended. Refreshments were served. The **provisional** date for next year's Annual Village Meeting is **Wednesday 28th April 2027 at 7pm in the Bernard Hall.**

6. Date and Time of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 27th MAY 2026 at 7.00pm in the Bernard Hall