



Awbridge Parish Council

Clerk Report – SEPTEMBER 2025

1. Planning Decisions:

1.1

25/01140/TPOS 21.05.2025 T1 - Beech - Fell to 3m -Coombe Cottage, Saunders Lane, Awbridge CONSENT subject to conditions and notes 24.07.2025

1.2

25/01270/FULLS 16.06.2025 Extension to existing patio area and link path (retrospective) - Unit H06, Block G, Stanbridge Earls Estate PERMISSION subject to conditions& notes 12.08.2025

2. Correspondence

2.1 From All Saints Church

On behalf of the Fabric Committee of All Saints Awbridge Church (I am its secretary - Fred is the chair), and the wider Parish Church Council - including our clergy - could I please send an enormous thank you to the Awbridge Parish Council for your very generous donations for the loop system and the streaming equipment that has recently been installed in the church building.

You might be interested to know that last Sunday we successfully completed our first live stream! The original intention was to enable the streaming to be used for weddings and funerals so that those unable to attend in person could join with their friends and families online - but it was also suggested that the tech could be used to enable those who could not physically join us for Sunday services because of ill health to join us on YouTube - and we have therefore set up a YouTube channel that can be accessed by invitation. If you hear of anyone who would like to join us in this way, please encourage them to send an email to awbridge.church@gmail.com and we can enable this to happen.

For our first service there was only one invitation - which of course was to Fred - a wonderful occasion for the church - and I believe Fred too!

Please pass on our thanks to all who sit on the Parish Council and agreed to make both these generous donations - and I hope they will be pleased to hear how the streaming equipment has already been put to good use.

We have also already received very positive feedback from those who use our new loop system for the hard of hearing. To quote one individual "It's the first time I have heard things clearly in this church in years!!"

As I am sure Fred mentioned, the church has a significant repairs and refurbishment programme programme for the building - and our outline plans for the talks, concerts and events that we hope will be popular with the local community as well as providing additional funds for the programme.

I have put in copy of this email Dawn Mouland - who is our church treasurer - and I am sure she will be able to provide you with the church bank details so that the donations can be transferred to the church.

Once again, very many thanks for your generosity.

2.2 From S Nightingale

With regard to Elan City SIDs, although I do manage a couple of them I'm afraid I would not want to take on anymore. They are a large and cumbersome sign that, from a contractor point of view, are not very easy to take down and install, especially when installed at height. Additionally, if you did purchase from this (or another) manufacturer, the existing brackets you have for the SLR would not be compatible. I appreciate that may not be too much of a concern for you, but would limit your options if you ever wanted to install the SLR at the new solar SID sites (just to mix things up, for example).

My recommendation is not to proceed with this but continue with plan to buy new from Westcotec.

2.3 From Romsey Ramblers

Ramblers are best known for the 1000s of walks they lead across the country each year. What is less well known is the campaigning they do to protect and expand/improve the PROW network and their practical work maintaining the current network. In this respect, from a Ramblers Association perspective, Romsey Ramblers Group has responsibility for 26 parishes to the west and north of Romsey, including Awbridge Parish. Over recent years, Romsey Ramblers Group has developed a strong reputation and considerable experience with work on the PROW network. We have, for example, replaced at least 8 stiles with pedestrian or kissing gates; replaced 2 footbridges; installed numerous fingerposts and waymarker posts; installed a handrail and repaired broken steps. We have also cleared several 100 metres of vegetation from footpaths. Much of the materials for this work is funded by HCC, landowners or the appropriate Parish Council, though we have obtained funding through Ramblers for 4 of the gates and have funding promised for 2 more. We also complete whole parish surveys on a regular basis where we walk every PROW within a parish; record all PROW furniture/signage and report our findings to HCC. Much of the data in HCC's Countryside Access Management System (CAMS) is the result of these surveys. Awbridge is the next parish on our survey programme, indeed, a start was made today. If any Parish Councillor would wish to discuss rights of way matters, I would be happy to meet at any convenient time.

2.4

I write to express concern over the recent installation of large white gates around Kent's Oak, labeled as welcoming travelers to "Awbridge". This placement, in my view, misrepresents both the historical and geographical location of Awbridge.

A review of Historic England archives shows that many of the buildings along the southern section of the B3084 - particularly along Stanbridge Lane and transitioning onto Dunbridge Lane - are Grade II listed, including redbrick terraces, farmhouses, thatched cottages, and even a tucked-away chapel. House names in this area often reflect the village identity of Awbridge, further affirming its historical continuity. Ordnance Survey maps dating back to 1871 show this area has experienced only gradual development over the last 130 years. The Test Way, which intersects this stretch of road, highlights its historical and geographical importance, running between Mottisfont and Romsey Mill. On these maps, the area is clearly marked as "Awbridge". In contrast, turning west off the B3084 onto Romsey Road brings you to a more modern cluster of housing "Kent's Oak" where the same Historic England archives list no protected buildings. The 1871 map labels this area as "Awbridge Common TP", and shows just six buildings near the present-day intersection of Romsey Road, Danes Road, and Saunders Lane. The track to Butlers Wood Farm is shown as unnamed. These distinctions are clear in the historical record and suggest that the original core of Awbridge lies along the B3084, not at the current location of Kent's Oak.

It is especially perplexing to read the Awbridge Neighbourhood Development Plan (April 2024) in light of these recent developments. On page 7, Figures 5 and 6 show the clearly defined location of Awbridge. Page 18 describes the distinct break in land along Romsey Road between the settlements of Kent's Oak and Awbridge, confirming that they are not contiguous and should be regarded as separate entities. Most notably, page 34 includes section 7.1.3 and Figure 22, which explicitly outline the "village of Kent's Oak" and its defined settlement boundary - remarkably similar to the area now enclosed by the newly installed gates. That the Parish Council took the time to research and publish this document, only to then proceed in contradiction to its own findings, is difficult to understand. This risks eroding local identity, confusing residents and visitors, and rewriting the village's heritage.

Moreover, at a time of limited public funds, the decision to use Council Tax money to install these gates - particularly without wider consultation - raises valid concerns. Residents of the B3084, who have long identified with the village of Awbridge, have effectively been excluded from this visual redefinition.

If the intention was to implement traffic calming measures, the gates could have been labeled appropriately as "Welcome to Kent's Oak", respecting both road safety and historical accuracy. Additionally, the existing Awbridge sign along Stanbridge Lane could be improved - perhaps with a more prominent or traditional design, such as a wooden gate.

I respectfully request that the Parish Council reconsider the signage and align future actions with the historical and planning context already established. Our village's identity deserves preservation not reinvention.

2.5 From Village Hall

Just to let you know that the village hall has not changed its mind where the funding will be used.

Our plan which we have been working on for the last two years, has always been to start with an extension to the hall in order to accommodate more people for popular social events and large family events.

Subsequent to that we have added the servery / storage area, the patio cover and more recently the kitchen extension in response to popular ideas highlighted in the March village survey.

The play area will need to be moved to make way for the hall extension. The current play area is in need of a lot of repairs and maintenance, so we decided to go for a brand-new play area.

We have received a grant of £20,000 from the Lottery fund specifically for play areas. We would obviously like to receive the fund of £35,000 from the parish Council but would like to put it towards the building cost.

We have recently been offered a donation of £25,000 from ADVA.

My request for a letter is to provide evidence of support for two grants we are applying for - ACRE £62,000 and Test Valley £25,000

Neither of these two grant applications specify the play area, which is why we would like your support for the building project.

I hope this all makes sense and that you will have time to discuss this at your meeting this evening.

3. MISC

3.1 Section 72 Licence for Speed Sign received from HCC

3.2 New Lengthsman Co-ordinator

Derek Hall

Chairman Stockbridge Parish Council & Acting Lengthsman Coordinator - Stockbridge Cluster
Tel 07710 173360

3.3 Licence applied for and received from HCC for Speed signs

3.4 Waiting for HCC to complete survey

