

Clerk to Council: Elizabeth Martin

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PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Meeting of Alton Parish Council
held at the Coronation Hall on Thursday 15th January 2026
commencing at 19:00.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors, Michael Golden [MG], Mike Spencer [MS], Polly Carson [PC] Ewan MacKinnon [EMK], Paul Savage [PS]

OFFICERS PRESENT: Elizabeth Martin [EM], Clerk to Council

CHAIR: Michael Golden [MG]

APOLOGIES: Kate Thompson [KT]

ABSENT: Hayley Kington [HK]

Full Parish Council Meeting Opened: 19:03

FC25/26/133 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Kate Thompson [KT], who was on holiday.

Proposed [MS]. Seconded [PC]. Passed.

Hayley Kington [HK]

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the apologies be approved.

FC25/26/134 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION

None

FC25/26/135 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Proposed [EMK]. Seconded [PC]. Passed.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT The Minutes Of The Parish Council Meeting Held On 18th September 2025, Be Agreed As Presented.

FC25/26/136 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Proposed [EMK]. Seconded [PC]. Passed.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT The Minutes Of The Parish Council Meeting Held On 20th November 2025, Be Agreed As Presented.

FC25/26/137 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Seasonal Awareness and Vigilance: The Chair highlighted the approaching change of seasons (transitioning into winter), noting the increased risks associated with wetter weather, such as potential flooding or blockages. He urged all councilors and residents to remain vigilant in monitoring local drains and gullies to identify any emerging issues early. This proactive approach was presented as essential to prevent minor problems from escalating into major disruptions, particularly in a rural parish like Alton, which has a history of flood-related challenges.

Reporting Mechanisms: Specific guidance was provided on how to report issues. The Chair recommended using the Wiltshire Council app for submitting reports on drains, gullies, or related problems. He emphasized that once a report is made via the app, individuals should also inform the Parish Clerk (Elizabeth Martin [EM]) to enable follow-up and coordination. This dual-step process was intended to ensure that parish-level concerns are tracked and escalated if necessary, leveraging both digital tools and local oversight.
<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts-online-reporting>

Wiltshire Council's Gully Cleaning System: A significant portion of the announcements involved explaining Wiltshire Council's gully maintenance framework. The Chair noted that Wiltshire Council allows for the cleaning of up to five gullies per parish annually, subject to specific criteria (e.g., evidence of blockage or flood risk). He reported that the parish had recently submitted requests for five such locations, based on identified priorities. This was framed as a positive step but with a caveat: if broader or more systemic issues arise (e.g., widespread drainage problems across the parish), additional actions would be required, potentially involving escalation to Wiltshire Council or other bodies like the Flood Risk Management Group.

Action Points

- Potential walks or inspections (e.g., with Unitary Councillor Paul Oatway) to assess open drains and add protective grills where needed.

FC25/26/138 TO RECEIVE, FOR INFORMATION, THE CLERK'S REPORT:

The Clerk noted the upcoming budget setting and precept request for 2026-2027. The audit process was starting again, with items requiring signatures. The .gov website transition was progressing slowly, and the Clerk proposed holding a workshop to assist councilors in moving to the new email system, with dates to be confirmed. The Clerk had contacted Ben Owen for a grass cutting quote, who expressed interest in continuing. The Clerk was chasing highways on permissions for the speed indicator device (SID), suggesting proceeding without if necessary, and proposed a weekend mini surgery in February to help with email setup on devices.

Action Points:

- *Clerk to look at holding a workshop for the Council to move emails over to the new email system.*
- *Clerk to chase highways on SID permissions.*

FC25/26/139 FINANCE MATTERS

FC25/26/140 To Receive For Information, Actions Taken By The Clerk Since The Last Meeting In Accordance With FR4.1.3

None.

FC25/26/141 To Receive For Information, Disbursements Made Since The Last Meeting

Payee	Description	Amount
B/P: Wiltshire Council	ELECTION FEES	£310.00
B/P: Community Heartbeat	DEFIB BATTERY	£391.40
B/P: Elizabeth Martin	NOVEMBER SALARY	
B/P: Elizabeth Martin	NOVEMBER ALLOWANCE	£25.00
B/P: Elizabeth Martin	DECEMBER SALARY	
B/P: Elizabeth Martin	DECEMBER ALLOWANCE	£25.00
B/P: HMRC	120PE02174058Q3	
B/P: LDS	FLOOD REPORT	£780.00
B/P: Elizabeth Martin	NOVEMBER ALLOWANCE	£25.00
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS) (Nov)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£20.99
Direct Debit (CHARLTON BAKER LTD) (Nov)	3W7WQGS	£20.50
Service Charge (November)	UNITY TRUST	£6.00
Service Charge (December)	UNITY TRUST	£6.00
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£11.99
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£20.99
Direct Debit	ICO	£47.00
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£11.99
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£11.99
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS) (Dec)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£20.99
Direct Debit (CHARLTON BAKER) (Dec)	CHARLTON BAKER	£20.50

FC25/26/142 To Consider And Approve The Schedule Of Forthcoming Payments

Payee	Description	Amount
B/P: Elizabeth Martin	JAN - MARCH SALARY	
B/P: Elizabeth Martin	JAN – MARCH ALLOWANCE	£25.00
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS) (Jan-March)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£20.99
Service Charge	JAN – MARCH UNITY TRUST	£6.00
Direct Debit (GOCARDLESS) (Feb-March)	HUGOFOX LTD.-VR2QXGJ	£11.99
Direct Debit (Jan-March)	CHARLTON BAKER	£20.50

Proposed [MG]. Seconded [MS]. Passed.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT The Approval Of The Schedule Of Forthcoming Payments Be Accepted.

FC25/26/143 TO CONSIDER AND AGREE THE 2026-2027 PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET

Proposed [MG]. Seconded [PC]. Passed.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT The 2026-2027 Parish Council Budget Be Accepted As Presented.

FC25/26/144 TO CONSIDER AND AGREE THE PARISH PRECEPT FOR 2026-2027 PROPOSED

Based On FC25/26/140 The Precept Request For 2026-2027 Will Be £7911.00

Proposed [MG]. Seconded [PC]. Passed.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT A Precept Request For 2026-27 Of £7911.00 Be Sent To Wiltshire Council.

FC25/26/145 TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

FC25/26/146 LHFIG (Local Highway And Footway Improvement Group)

Schedule Of Meetings 2026: Wednesday 18th February 2026, 10:00, via Teams. No update.

FC25/26/147 Pewsey Area Board.

Next Meeting 9th March 2026, 19:00, Location, Bouverie Hall, Goddard Road, Pewsey, SN9 5QE.

Schedule Of Meetings for 2026: 8th June 2026, Bedwyn Memorial Hall, Frog Lane, Great Bedwyn, Wiltshire, SN8 3PB
 schedule Of Meetings for

FC25/26/148 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

FC25/26/149 To Receive An Update On The Flood Survey

A kick-off meeting with Michael Bolston had occurred, with another scheduled for Saturday to map issues in Alton Barnes. Councillors discussed extending to Alton Priors and Honey Street areas, identifying problems like drainage at Bakers Corner, broken drains, and erosion. Volunteers were assigned to coordinate input for different areas. [MS] for the Honey street area and [PS] for Alton Priors

Action Points:

- *Council to coordinate flood issues in Priors and Honey Street for inclusion in the survey.*
- *Council to meet with consultant on Saturday for initial mapping.*

FC25/26/150 TO RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION, CORRESPONDENCE AND CIRCULARS RECEIVED

Clerk to Circulate

FC25/26/151 TO CONSIDER ITEMS OF MAINTENANCE

Discussion focused on the notice board near the cafe, which has defects and may not last long if repaired. Councillors agreed to obtain quotes for a new, smaller one, including from local craftsman Robert and another source, matching the style of existing boards. Previous approval for resealing existing boards was noted, with follow-up on repairs.

Action Points:

- *Clerk to obtain quotes for new notice board.*
- *Clerk to follow up on resealing and repairs to existing notice boards.*

FC25/26/152 KEY MESSAGES

The precept was approved as inflation-based figures to cover running costs of the Council. New projects to rejuvenate the springs were discussed. A litter picking initiative was proposed for March (sponsored by IDVerde), potentially as a community event on national spring clean day (13th March), with volunteers and coordination needed

FC25/26/153 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be on the Thursday 2nd April 2026 at 7:00pm at the Coronation Hall.

Meeting Closed 20:27

These minutes are accepted as a true and accurate record: -

Signed _____ Date _____

Summary Of Public Participation Section (Part A)

Public Participation Opened 19:02 and closed at 19:03

I. To Receive a report from the Unitary Councillor Paul Oatway arrived at 19:47

Local Planning and Housing

Paul Oatway arrived at 19:47 and provided an update on local planning, housing, energy, governance, and police matters. On "grips" on the hill: He discussed historical "grips" (channels designed to lead water off the road) on the hill from the White Horse, noting that these had been effective in the past for managing runoff. He plans to request the highways engineer to reinstall them using a specialized tractor to dig appropriate channels, addressing ongoing erosion and flooding risks in the area. On energy and governance: The new administration is actively exploring wind turbines as part of broader renewable energy initiatives. Paul indicated that these are unlikely to impact the rural Vale of Pewsey but might be deployed on the more urban western side of the county. Regarding devolution, he explained that within 18–24 months, a "devolved strategic authority" is expected to be established above the unitary council level, led by an elected Mayor. He expressed concerns that this could lead to funding decisions becoming more politically driven, potentially affecting local priorities and resource allocation. On the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC): Paul strongly supports the government's plan to abolish the PCC role within three years, citing its lack of tangible benefits to communities and high operational costs, including a staff of 50 members with substantial salaries.

II. Report from Community Police Officer, PCSO

No report.

III. Comments from members of the public to be considered by the Council regarding items on the agenda.

No reports were received from members of the public.