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PARISH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Meeting of Alton Parish Council
held at the Coronation Hall on Thursday 20th November 2025
commencing at 19:00.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors, Michael Golden [MG], Ewan MacKinnon [EMK],
Kate Thompson [KT], Paul Savage [PS]

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

CHAIR: Michael Golden [MG]

APOLOGIES: Hayley Kington [HK]

ABSENT: Mike Spencer [MS], Polly Carson [PC]

Full Parish Council Meeting Opened: 19:12

FC25/26/113 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Michael Golden [MG], who was on holiday.
Proposed [KT]. Seconded [EMK]. Passed.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the apologies be approved.

FC25/26/114 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION

None

FC25/26/115 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Proposed [KT]. Seconded [PS]. Passed.

**IT WAS RESOLVED THAT The Minutes Of The Parish Council Meeting
Held On 18th September 2025, Be Deferred To The Next Meeting.**

FC25/26/116 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 the 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.

FC25/26/117 TO RECEIVE, FOR INFORMATION, THE CLERK'S REPORT:

- The Clerk highlighted upcoming budget setting and precept request for 2026-2027.
- Audit will soon begin again and items will require signature

- The .gov website is slow at being used and moved over. EM to look at holding a workshop for the Council to move emails over to the new email system to help them find the new email user friendly and work easier to follow. Dates to be confirmed at the next meeting.

FC25/26/118 FINANCE MATTERS

FC25/26/119 To Receive For Information, Actions Taken By The Clerk Since The Last Meeting In Accordance With FR4.1.3

None.

FC25/26/120 To Receive For Information, Disbursements Made Since The Last Meeting

FC25/26/121 To Consider And Approve The Schedule Of Forthcoming Payments

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

Proposed [MG]. Seconded [KT]. Passed.

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

FC25/26/122 TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT 2026-2027 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

Document Received. Parish Council asked to put forward any queries before the next meeting.

FC25/26/123 TO RECEIVE ANY UPDATES FROM WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

FC25/26/124 LHFIG (Local Highway And Footway Improvement Group)

Schedule Of Meetings 2025-2026 Wednesday 18th February 2026, 10:00, via Teams. No update.

FC25/26/125 Pewsey Area Board.

Schedule Of Meetings for 2025: Monday 24th November, Pewsey Val RFC, The Angela Yeates Memorial Community Sports Ground, Wilcot Road, Pewsey, SN9 5NL

FC25/26/126 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP**FC25/26/127 To Receive An Update On The Flood Survey**

The beginning survey has been commissioned This marks the start of the process, but no completion timeline was specified during the meeting.

The beginning survey is a review (e.g., analyzing existing data, maps, historical records, and possibly hydrological models) rather than immediate on-site fieldwork. This aligns with standard flood risk assessment protocols, where initial phases involve data gathering and analysis before any physical surveys or community consultations.

The Clerk noted that further information was required, for clarification once the area of review had been agreed. Subsequent information (e.g., site visits, detailed modeling, or recommendations) would depend on the findings from this initial phase. If additional details emerge that require council input, the matter would be brought back to the full council for review.

FC25/26/128 TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE DATES FOR THE FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2026-2027

Proposed [MG]. Seconded [PS]. Passed.

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT The Dates For The Full Council Meetings In 2026-2027 Be Accepted As Proposed.

FC25/26/129 TO RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION, CORRESPONDENCE AND CIRCULARS RECEIVED

- Briefing note 25-08: Gypsies and Travellers DPD – Update And Call For Sites
- First Edition Of New Leisure And Libraries Newsletter

FC25/26/130 TO CONSIDER ITEMS OF MAINTENANCE**War Monument (near the canal/farmyard)**

- Trees and vegetation are growing on the top of the underground structure, which could cause damage over time.
- The monument is a listed structure with a plaque commemorating troops who died; the parish council previously agreed to take responsibility for its maintenance.
- Access to the monument is currently at the landowner's discretion (private land), but there are obligations for listed memorials.

- Ben Owen has reported the need for attention; he has been clearing nettles and moving large plastic items to improve access.
- Discussion on whether the landowner has any responsibilities and whether Rights of Way should be contacted regarding access.

Footpaths and Rights of Way

- Footpaths have been ploughed up, making them difficult to access and slippery; people are walking on the grass, creating uneven additional paths.
- Suggestion to apply to move a footpath around the edge of a field (though this would involve a lengthy process).
- Turnstiles/stile in Alton Priors still pending update from Michael Golden [MG], to speak to the landowner.

Dead Roadside Vegetation

- Dead vegetation along roadsides is untidy and needs prioritising.
- Parish steward to be requested to deal with it.

Litter Picking on Verges

- Proposed as a community event with tea/cake once the verges have died back.

Small Swing over Bridge

- Has nails sticking out – Councilor Michael Golden [MG] to have a look.

Site Opposite the Mill House (Honey Street)

- Site is very unattractive and increasingly dangerous.
- New house has been built; owners plan to develop two more houses first, then work their way around the site.
- Council agreed to ask the owners for a statement on the condition, safety measures, and development schedule.

Mobile Home/Trailer in Village Street (Alton Priors)

- A mobile home is present while a house is being renovated.
- Relationship breakdown means work has slowed; the trailer may remain longer than previously thought.
- No license is required for a trailer in Wiltshire (unlike some other areas).
- Council agreed to seek clarification from Wiltshire Council enforcement (Steve Jenkins) on the legal situation and provide an update to residents.

- Notice board still pending due to Clerk's workload. Parish steward requested for signs and dead roadside vegetation (untidy along road). Footpaths ploughed up, making access difficult; expect improvement after drilling/rolling. Suggestion to apply to move footpath around edge, but process involved. Litter picking on verges once died back, potentially as community event with tea/cake. Turnstiles/stile in Alton Priors pending update from MG speaking to landowner. Small swing over bridge has nails sticking out; remind MG.

FC25/26/131 KEY MESSAGES

Paul Oatway asked for the Parish Council to confirm that the Council held liability insurance for the playpark – this was confirmed.

FC25/26/132 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be on the Thursday 15th January 2026 at 7:00pm at the Coronation Hall.

Meeting Closed 20:25

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

Signed _____ Date _____

Summary Of Public Participation Section (Part A)

Public Participation Opened 19:00 and closed at 19:11

I. To Receive a report from the Unitary Councillor Paul Oatway.

Local Planning and Housing

- The Local Plan: Currently delayed by the Secretary of State for unknown reasons.
- Village Impact: Paul noted that there is minimal impact on small villages. The focus is on larger villages like Upavon, where 18 to 100 houses are expected over the next five years. Small villages will mostly see "in-fill" development only.

Road Transport and Freight Strategy

- A350 Strategy: Wiltshire Council's preferred north-south route is the A350 (linking Poole to the M4/M5). Paul stated he strongly disagrees with this focus, arguing that it ignores the A338, A342, and A345.
- The "Pinch Points": He highlights two specific areas where heavy lorries cannot pass each other effectively:

Upavon: Above the new housing estate where verges are being destroyed.

Devizes: The turn toward Etchilhampton.

- Distribution Hubs: Paul stated that lorries from large distribution centres in Amesbury and Andover will not travel west to the A350; they will continue to use the A342 and A345, putting "huge pressure" on those roads.

Local Highway Maintenance

- C52 Resurfacing: After eight years of lobbying, Paul confirmed that the C52 (between the Woodbridge Inn and Alton Barnes) will be resurfaced between now and Spring 2026.

Process: A patching program will happen first, followed by a full resurface.

- Funding Politics: Paul mentioned that while the current administration is taking credit for road repairs, the funding (£22m + £7m) was actually programmed by the previous administration.

Drainage and Flood Prevention

- Current Status: Highways engineers report that all drains and pipes (including the one from the Manor) are currently running and clear.

- Local Concerns:

The Willow Tree Drain: A council member noted this has never been properly fixed despite highway attendance.

Alton Priors: During recent heavy rain, the verges were nearly overwhelmed.

The "Open Drain": Discussion regarding an open drain/ditch near "Polly's" that needs a grill to prevent blockages from twigs. Paul agreed to a site walk next week to identify the exact location.

- "Grips" on the Hill: There was a discussion about historical "grips" (channels to lead water off the road) on the hill from the White Horse. Paul plans to ask the highways engineer to reinstall these using a specialized tractor.

Energy and Governance

- Wind Turbines: The new administration is looking at wind turbines. Paul doesn't expect them to impact the Vale of Pewsey but thinks they might appear on the western, more urban side of the county.

- Devolution: Within 18–24 months, a "devolved strategic authority" will likely be created above the unitary council, led by a Mayor. Paul expressed concern that funding might become politically driven under this model.

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

- Abolition of the PCC: Paul supports the government's plan to remove the PCC role within three years, citing a lack of benefit and high costs (50 staff members, high salaries).

Council Politics

- Liberal Democrat Majority: Paul noted the council is now run by Liberal Democrats in a tight coalition with Independents.
- Budgetary Concerns: He anticipates difficult budget meetings ahead as the new administration looks to borrow more money for their projects.

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.