

IN MEMORY OF
HM QUEEN
ELIZABETH II

Sadly missed, but
always remembered
for a life of
dedication and
service.

This update was printed
before the news of the
Queen's death.

WEEDON PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT and UPDATE

September 2022

The Parish Council last published this report and update in July 2019. What a long time ago that seems!

We didn't feel it appropriate to produce a report in 2020 or 2021. But now it appears the worst of covid is over, it's a good time to update you.

We've had strange, difficult and sad times with the pandemic. But the Parish Council tried to make worthwhile improvements in the village infrastructure, while looking after the basics for the last three years.

And the community spirit shone through—culminating in the marvellous village Platinum Jubilee celebration and a WIN in the Bucks Best Kept Village contest.

There are new challenges ahead with the cost of living, energy and climate crises, but we will continue to do our very best for Weedon.



Weedon is a small village of 173 homes with a rich built heritage, set in an Area of Attractive Landscape. Over half the homes are in one of the two Conservation Areas and 21 are Listed Buildings.

Weedon Parish Council has seven councillor members, elected for 4 years at a time. The last elections took place in May 2021. Councillors are supported by the experienced professional Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer—the only (part-time) employee.

The Parish Council cares for the village environment and represents the parish within the local government context. Councillors not only attend meetings, but also undertake (unpaid) management and delivery of projects.

In addition, many residents carry out particular voluntary tasks around the village, and others contribute generously to specific projects.

It's not just the lovely environment that makes Weedon special. The community spirit has always been strong.

This was evident during the pandemic, when villagers wasted no time in responding to calls for volunteers. A Community Support Group offered regular contact and information through email and print, while particularly vulnerable people were helped with shopping, prescriptions and often daily checks on their wellbeing.

After covid, it's great to see venues and organisations taking up the baton of community activity again.

The **Five Elms** pub and restaurant, owned by two village families, is now run by new tenants. They have carried on old traditions, while bringing a new and exciting take on food, drinks and décor.

Covid grants enabled the village hall—the **Old Schoolroom**, a registered charity—to remain financially stable through the lockdown periods (even with no hiring income) and more hirers are now returning.

Weedon Village Association's wide range of events is back—one almost every month.

We hope you enjoy reading more about the village you live in. Maybe you'll even be inspired to get involved in more of the organisations and events!

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in Weedon



The Jubilee Street Party, Parade and Tugs of Fun were all put on from the village's own resources, and every resident was invited to take part free of charge. Over 250 people were there, from the oldest (99) to the youngest (6 months).

The Parish Council gave a £500 grant; the Old Schoolroom and Weedon Village Association made the total up to £1,000. Furniture, BBQs, bunting, gazebos and equipment were borrowed from all over the village—the hall, chapel, WVA and lots of homes.

The talent and unstinting efforts of the committee and so many villagers—and perfect weather—made for a memorable Weedon occasion. Fit for a Queen!

Best Kept Village Winners 2022

The Best Kept Village contest had not been held for the last two years. With new horticultural contractors finding their feet earlier in the year, we entered with relatively low expectations. But with a combination of all the special efforts people had made for the Jubilee, and lucky timing on the judges' visit just after a clean-up of the Chapel grounds, we were rewarded with a stunning score of 191 out of a possible 200.

The presentation will be made on September 24th and the village will proudly display its winner's sign for the next year.



The Parish Council looks after ... the park and graveyard

Our park and play area

The Park is owned and managed by the Parish Council, whose local contractors do grass and hedge cutting, path weed control and grass improvement treatment.

An annual safety inspection of the play equipment is carried out by ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) and we are also grateful to volunteers John and Frances Smith, who regularly check and clean all the items.



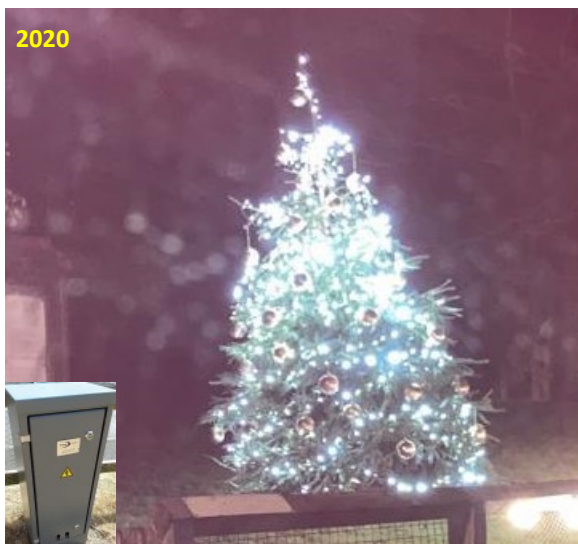
All repairs and safety improvements are initiated by the PC and carried out by accredited contractors.

Fortunately, we chose well with the wooden play equipment installed in 2013. This has been robust, requiring low maintenance and continues to be appealing to all ages, as well as looking appropriately rustic.

The native trees are growing into beautiful specimens, tended when needed.

Mains electricity cabinet and festive lights

2020



what's new?

*paid for by
the Parish
Council*

The Christmas tree lights are plugged into the new box.

More picnic tables with benches



2020

given by Weedon Village Association
Now there are 4!

Plank seat on the wall



2021

paid for by the Parish Council

No dogs are allowed in the Park, so this is a nice place for dog walkers to meet or rest.

Our war memorial and community graveyard



The Parish Council manages the Chapel graveyard and the grounds of the

War Memorial under a 99-year lease (until 2114) from the Methodists.

This is designated as a "local authority graveyard", and accepts burials, ashes interments and memorials for Weedon residents or those with strong links to the village. You can purchase the right to be buried in the graveyard in advance by applying to the Parish Council.

The PC's contractors cut the grass, strim round the graves, trim hedges, clear leaves and control weeds. Plus volunteer Paul Winrow checks the graveyard regularly—clearing strimmed grass and dead flowers, tidying around graves, neatening the edges of ground tablets and cleaning headstones.

The PC is looking at moving the rather unsightly compost and earth mounds at the back of the graveyard, and improving accessibility to lower graves with a grass-mat path.

what's new?

Bench looking back at the Chapel and graveyard



2021

*paid for by the family in memory
of Peter and Jean Kent*

... the pond and green spaces

Our village green and floral displays



We have some lovely floral displays in public areas in Weedon, and everyone made a fantastic contribution to the Jubilee festivities with their themed displays this year. These were especially commended by the Best Kept Village judges. Three are designed and planted up by volunteers at the request of the PC and the Old Schoolroom.



Clare Macdonald is responsible for the **Village Green Triangle Tub**, which complements the new fingerpost perfectly.



The **High Street Pump Trough** always looks neat and pretty, planted and cared for by Christine and Nic Nicolay.



Margaret Askew is behind the beautiful seasonal displays in the **Old Schoolroom Flower Tubs**, helped by other members of the hall committee.

The **Five Elms** has always made a great show of their hanging baskets and tubs, and we are delighted to see the new tenants continuing this tradition.

what's new?

Traditional fingerpost at the crossroads on the triangle green



an idea and design of the Parish Council, paid for by Transport for Bucks at Buckinghamshire Council

Our duckpond



The **pond** and its margins are owned by the PC, and a contractor regularly cuts the grass, trims plants and clears weeds. Steve and Jayne Richards ensure that the ducks have daily access to the food paid for by the Parish Council. They and other pond neighbours have brought in or even hatched new ducks when the numbers get low.

This year's low rainfall has brought a particular challenge in the pond's care, but also presented an opportunity. The PC worked with consultants, neighbours and contractors to decide on appropriate action, which involves dredging to remove the accumulated silt (mainly duck manure), so that the spring and stream that feed the pond are not choked off when the water starts flowing again. Works will be complete by the end of September.

The pond needs clearance every 10 years or so, and there are historic pictures of it being done over 100 years ago!

what's new?

purchased by Mark & Karen Adams and the Parish Council

The old bench (from 1977) was finally beyond repair.

Bench in memory of Maurice and Wendy Adams



Wood-effect litter bin



paid for by the Parish Council

The Parish Council looks after ... street furniture and lights

Our street 'furniture'

The PC looks after **seats and benches** around the village.

The PC also provides **litter bins** and **dog waste bins**, which are emptied weekly by Buckinghamshire Council under contract. The two litter bins in the Conservation Area needed renewing and the PC put new black bins in place of the old green ones.

The village roads are not routinely gritted. So **grit/salt bins** (and the grit in them) are provided by Bucks Council. They supplied two new standard green grit bins for grass verge sites to replace the old degraded ones, and the PC paid for two non-standard black heritage-style bins, complementing the stone and red brick walls of the Conservation Area.

what's new?

Victorian-style railings in the heart of the Conservation Area



a concept and design of the Parish Council, paid for by Transport for Bucks at Buckinghamshire Council

The old wooden railings along the High Street raised pavement needed significant work to be made safe. The PC proposed a black metal railing to fit in with the heart of the Conservation Area.

Black litter bins in the Conservation Area



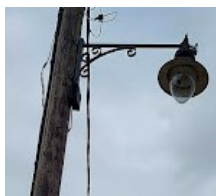
paid for by the Parish Council

Salt/grit bins



black paid for by the Parish Council, green from TfB

Our streetlights



The streetlight lanterns are owned and maintained by the Parish Council, and the PC pays for the electricity to power them.

We had been looking for some time to replace the outdated and expensive sodium lights with energy-saving LEDs.

However, we wanted to retain the heritage style of the lanterns

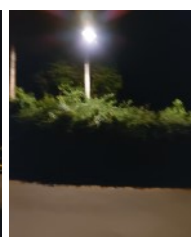
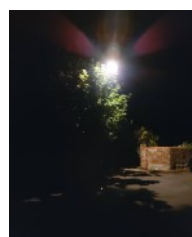
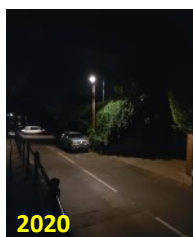
and to ensure a warm light rather than the harsh bluer whites from many LED installations. Fortunately a supplier came forward and councillors went on forays as far away as Oxfordshire and Northants to research the right light specifications.

The lights were converted in December 2020. They are proving their worth, saving more than half the energy and cost.

Thank goodness, with the increase in electricity prices.

what's new?

Replaced sodium lights with warm-white LEDs in heritage lanterns



paid for by the Parish Council

... verges and footpaths

Our grass verges

The PC has continued its “devolved highways services” contract with Buckinghamshire Council.

This includes **grass verge cutting** within the 30mph signs, minor highways maintenance works such as sign cleaning, pavement weed-killing and street sweeping.

Hedges and trees overhanging roads, pavements or verges are the landowner’s responsibility, and the PC encourages residents to keep them trimmed back.

Up to 2019, all the grass verges were close-cut, following the previous Buckinghamshire regime.

Since 2019, three stretches of verge have been designated as Wildflower Verges as part of the *Hedgerow Havens* initiative.

The PC continues to look after the **trees along New Road**, funded by villagers in 2007, and the **flowering bulbs in several places** producing lovely Spring displays.

Promoting wildlife biodiversity

The PC was approached by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust – BBOWT – to participate in “*Hedgerow Havens*”, an initiative to restore hedgerows and create miniature wildflower meadows on road verges to provide a vital resource for native wildlife and increase biodiversity.

The PC and BBOWT seeded the chosen verges in Autumn 2018 and additional seeding was done in subsequent years by Wild

Weedon. The wildflower verges back on to fields, rather than houses, allowing a contrast between the “wilder” areas and the close-cut grass of verges beside pavements in front of homes.

Management will be ongoing way into the future and the flowers and native grasses have been increasing each year. It’s been a challenge for all of us to accept the change in how these areas look, but we’re convinced it’s the right move.

Wildflower verges on Aston Abbotts Road and Cooks Hill



2019-2022

seeds from BBOWT, sowing by Wild Weedon volunteers, Parish Council pays for cutting

what's new?

Wild Weedon

Weedon Wildlife Group was formed in 2021 to protect and promote the wellbeing of wildlife in and around Weedon.

Their mission is to survey current species, identify opportunities to increase diversity and take swift action in practical ways.

The 5 Elm Trees



2022

As part of the Queen’s Green Canopy, Wild Weedon and George Anson planted 5 new disease-resistant elm trees in the field opposite Hinton House, and 7 more elsewhere.

Our public footpaths

Weedon’s public footpaths are user-friendly for all ages and most abilities, as stiles have been replaced by gates, with co-operation of farmers and landowners.

The PC—with residents’ help—monitors the condition of public footpaths to ensure that they meet minimum standards, as landowners must by law keep footpaths across their land clear.

The PC has responsibility for maintaining **Footpath 12** (New Road to Lilies), so that it stays free of nettles, brambles and encroaching branches from adjoining hedges. We carried out major works on the hedges and surface in early 2022.

what's new?

Village walk signs



designed for free by Martyn Allen, paid for by the Parish Council

A unique design featuring iconic Weedon features.

Wooden pedestrian gate and farm gate



2021

pedestrian gate paid for by the Parish Council and farm gate by landowner George Anson

Final gates on the village walk

the last 4 were given and fitted free by rRipple — a local volunteer group promoting footpath access



2020

The Parish Council ... liaises with Transport for Bucks

Roads, pavements and footpaths

Buckinghamshire Council, the unitary council that took over from Bucks County Council and AVDC, is the local Highways Authority. It has legal responsibility and public liability for all the roads, footways, pavements and footpaths in the county through its highways department *Transport for Bucks* (TfB).

Bucks Council has allowed parish councils to take on the grass verge cutting (only within the 30mph signs) and minor sign repairs and cleaning under a contract known as *Devolved Services*. But all other highways works are down to *Transport for Bucks*.

Weedon PC works with a designated Local Area Technician to inform and suggest what we think needs to be done on pot-holes, drains, signage, safety railings, kerbs, road surfacing, speed control measures, etc etc. We can even offer to contribute funds for specific projects.

But the decisions on works—and timings—are taken by TfB. That's why, with so many competing priorities in the county, it can take a very long time to get things done!

Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs MVAS



purchased by Weedon Parish Council and moved around 6 approved sites by Mark Talbott

Village entrance gates with 30mph signs



maintained by Weedon Parish Council under Devolved Services

Just repainted by Paul Winrow & Graham Delaney.

30mph bin stickers



purchased by Weedon Parish Council

Contact the PC if you need more of these.

what's new?

2nd No Through Road sign for Stockaway



lobbied for by Weedon Parish Council, installed and paid for by TfB

2021

what's new?

Community Speedwatch

In February 2022, we were given the go-ahead to start Community Speedwatch sessions within the 30mph zone of the village. This scheme is entirely volunteer-run.

Specified locations were risk-assessed and approved by Thames Valley Police and TfB. We bought the required A-frame warning signs, speed gun and hi-vis jackets. An initial cohort of volunteers carried out training online.

Sessions are being held regularly in two places identified as badly affected by speeding vehicles—Aston Abbotts Road and New Road.

Volunteer groups of at least three people stand in the approved locations at registered times. One

person checks the speed of the vehicle using the gun; two others record the number plate and vehicle details.

After the session, all the information is input online, and offenders receive letters from the police. A third offence triggers a police visit.

The campaign is going strongly, but we need more volunteers, so we don't lose momentum. If you can help, please contact Sarah Gibbs.

equipment purchased and scheme run by the Parish Council

Volunteers include councillors and other residents.



2022

... and Buckinghamshire Council

Planning consultation and local liaison

The Parish Council is consulted on every **planning application** for building in Weedon. It can respond to Buckinghamshire Council (the Planning Authority) with No Objection, Support, Comment or Objection, and a public planning meeting is held for each application to decide the PC response.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) classes Weedon as a “smaller village”. With relatively poor access to services and facilities, “smaller villages” are deemed only suitable for small-scale housing development (fewer than 5 new

dwellings), which must be within the existing developed footprint of the village. There are no new housing allocations in the VALP for Weedon.

The PC also monitors tree works applications in the Conservation Areas.

Weedon's parish councillors attend meetings of the **Wing and Irvinghoe Community Board**, a forum set up by Buckinghamshire Council to bring together parish and unitary councillors and other local stakeholders in one relatively informal quarterly session. This forum helps the PC to stay informed and

linked into projects in the wider local area, and grants can also be applied for from the Community Board.

The PC maintains direct contact with **Thames Valley Police**, whose Neighbourhood Team regularly attends PC meetings to exchange information on crime and crime prevention.

Villagers operate **Neighbourhood Watch** on an informal basis, and email is used to get urgent information out quickly to residents.



The Parish Council is funded by a share of your council tax

The PC's main **INCOME** comes from the Weedon parish precept, funded by residents' Council Tax. The PC decides how much precept to request each year.

Weedon households have paid the **same amount** of village council tax for the last 11 years.

Additional sources of income include agricultural rent, plus:-

- ◇ A grant for devolved services from Buckinghamshire Council
- ◇ Donations for specific items from residents and organisations like Weedon Village Association
- ◇ Grants from elsewhere, such as the Community Boards
- ◇ Fees for burials and memorials in the chapel graveyard.

Income

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Band D Council Tax	£67.22	£67.21	£67.21
Precept	£13,890	£13,920	£13,810
Other Income	£4,372	£3,650	£4,575

Routine **EXPENDITURE** includes part-time employment of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, and payment of a contribution to clerk office and computer costs.

We also pay for membership fees to professional organisations, training for clerk and councillors, public liability insurance, rental of meeting rooms, the annual audit and hosting the village website.

However, you will have seen throughout this report that the PC's routine expenditure is mainly on repairs and maintenance — looking after the village.

This includes street lighting electricity and repairs, park equipment repairs, horticultural works to park, pond, graveyard, verges, footpaths and trees, waste and dog bin emptying.

Expenditure

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Clerk & Office	£3,963	£3,656	£4,049
Routine Expenditure	£11,230	£13,185	£7,522
Project Expenditure	£2,626	£10,829	£1,174

The PC still has some **RESERVES** from the time when Buckingham Park was part of our parish. We can draw on those for projects like the streetlight conversion.

For 2022/23 we are budgeting for further speed control measures and works on landscaping the rear of the chapel graveyard.

Reserves

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Reserves carried forward	£29,461	£19,361	£25,001

WEEDON PARISH COUNCIL

Responsibilities

Funded by Weedon share of Council Tax

DIRECT

- Park and Play Area
- Pond and Surrounds • Parish Pump
- War Memorial
- Chapel Graveyard
- Streetlights (24) • Defibrillator
- Litter, Grit and Dog Bins
- Street Seats and Benches
- Noticeboards (3) • Website
- Speedwatch & MVAS Signs and Equipment
- Floral Displays • New Road Trees

UNDER CONTRACT TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

- Grass Verges (inside 30mph)
- Village Green Triangle
- Cleaning of Streets and Roadsigns
- Monitoring Public Footpaths, Roads and Pavements to keep clear

AS CONSULTEE TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

- On planning applications
- On Local Development Plans

Parish Clerk and Financial Officer

Ruth Millard, Parish Clerk
32 Campbell Close
Linden Village
Buckingham
MK18 7HP

Phone: 01280 814739

Email:

parishclerk@weedonbucks.org.uk

Parish Council Meetings

- 3rd Tuesday of odd-numbered months Jan-Mar-May-Jul-Sep-Nov
- Planning meetings as the need arises
- Agendas posted on main noticeboard and website with 3 working days' notice
- Open Forum at every meeting

Other Weedon Contacts

Weedon Village Association
Old Schoolroom
Tuesday Club
Methodist Chapel
Chapel Graveyard
Weedon Charities
Golf Society
Parish Magazine Editor
The Five Elms
Wild Weedon

Catherine Rodnight 01296... 641071
Shirley Bush 641382
Judy Nagele 641278
Sarah Gibbs 07545 350035
Wendy Kett 640366
Wendy Kett 640366
Colin Rose 641622 / 07885 201150
Ralph Followell 641998
Andrew 256057
Sally Jones 641425

Local Area Buckinghamshire Councillors

Ashley Bond	Peter Cooper	Diana Blamires
641343 / 07976 729567	681250 / 07860 255833	07748 937484

Parish Councillors

Elected for 4 years from May 2021

Joanna Rose	Chair	641622/07885 201159
Sarah Gibbs	Vice Chair	07545 350035
Tom Jameson-Evans		640845
Wendy Kett		640366
Graham Delaney		292303
Poonam Gupta		640507
David Atkins		07711 150077

Village communication

The secure village **website**

<https://weedonbucks.org.uk>

is maintained by the PC and hosted by a local provider.

Community organisations are all featured on the site and update their own sections. New postings comply with the government's Website Content Accessibility Guidelines.

This **Parish Council Report and Update** is normally published yearly and a copy is delivered free to every home.

Email, which was widely used to communicate quickly and efficiently with Weedon residents during the pandemic, has continued to be important. It is ONLY used for emails of community interest.

The free **Parish Magazine**, produced for

the local Anglican church partnership, is distributed monthly by email, with printed copies delivered to those who don't do email.

A **Parish Council noticeboard** is located at the High Street crossroads. Official notices are posted here and on the website. Two open noticeboards are also provided for community use at this crossroads and at the top of East End.

Email joanna@cjrose.net if you would like to be added to our village email list

weedonbucks.org.uk