

WEEDON PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT and UPDATE

September 2023



Weedon Parish Council produces a report and update annually, so that you can read more about the village you live in and what the Parish Council and other organisations have been doing over the past year. Every home in the village gets a free copy.

All the contacts are on the back page, so don't hesitate to call someone if you need help or want to get more involved with the council or any other village group.

The Parish Council

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 Conservation Areas and 21 are Listed Buildings.

Weedon Parish Council has seven councillor members, elected for 4 years at a time. The next elections are in May 2025. The experienced professional Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer is the only paid (part-time) employee.

The Parish Council is the first tier of English local government. We care for the village environment and liaise with the "principal authority" Buckinghamshire Council. Councillors not only attend regular meetings, but also undertake (unpaid) management and delivery of projects. Other residents also take on voluntary tasks or give generously to particular projects.

Weedon also has a thriving social and community life.

- ⇒ **The Old Schoolroom** (registered charity) provides a fairly-priced historic and characterful venue for private hirers and community groups
- ⇒ The **Five Elms** pub and restaurant, owned by two village families, offers a real "public house" welcome with award-winning food and drink
- ⇒ **Weedon Village Association** arranges a variety of functions to suit all ages and tastes

Plus a range of other informal activities: exercise classes, book clubs, talks, pop-up cafes, voluntary interest groups and many more.

You'll be made very welcome at these.

The King's Coronation in Weedon



Following on from the wonderful Platinum Jubilee event in June 2022, the village again came together for a free Celebration Picnic to celebrate King Charles's coronation.

With a grant from the Parish Council, Weedon Village Association presented an afternoon in the Park, featuring Big Band Jazz, bring-your-own picnic or Five Elms "street" food and a stunning centrepiece cake made by Lizzy and Charlotte Birks.

An address by the Deputy Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire Sir Francis Habgood rounded off another memorable Royal occasion in Weedon.

Bucks Best Kept Village Win again in 2023

After last year's win in the Gurney Cup, for villages with a population of 500 and under, we did not expect to be able to repeat the success in 2023. Particularly as we were now competing with all last year's winners for the Tindall Cup. But you pulled out all the stops, and we WON again!

The Tindall Cup was presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Bucks, Countess Howe, on Saturday 23rd September. We can be very proud of the Best Kept Village sign in place for another year.

Full marks for floral displays

The floral displays in the village gained 15 out of 15 marks in the contest. We submitted pictures of **Spring daffodils** (many planted by the PC and volunteers for the Millennium) as another example to complement the flowers in bloom during the judging period. Three of the summer floral displays are designed and planted by volunteers at the request of the PC and the Old Schoolroom.

- ◆ Clare Macdonald designs and plants the **Village Green Triangle Tub**.
- ◆ The **High Street Pump Trough** is filled and cared for by Christine and Nic Nicolay.
- ◆ Margaret Askew is behind the seasonal displays in the **Old Schoolroom Flower Tubs**.
- ◆ The **Five Elms** hanging baskets are always much appreciated.



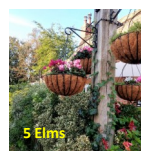
Tindall Cup



Daffodils



Pump



5 Elms



Schoolroom



Triangle

The Parish Council looks after the village community spaces ...

The Park and Play Area

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

The trees on the Park have matured beautifully, and the wooden play equipment continues to be attractive and robust.

The War Memorial and Chapel 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.

The graveyard is open to all Weedon residents and you can apply in advance to the PC to book a burial plot.



The PC's contractors cut the grass, trim round graves, trim hedges,

clear leaves and control weeds. Volunteer Paul Winrow does regular additional tidying and clearing.

In January, works became necessary to the beautiful copper beech tree near the War Memorial, due to overhanging of the road, the memorial and the neighbouring Abbey Cottage. It's under a TPO Tree Protection Order, so formal permission was required from Bucks Council. The job was carried out most professionally by South Bucks Tree Surgeons.

The earth spoil heaps at the back of the graveyard will be removed this autumn.

what's new?

Tree surgery to Copper Beech

significant TPO tree works paid by the Parish Council with donation from Abbey Cottage



The 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.



Last September, the water level of the pond was at its lowest for some time. This provided the opportunity for the 10-yearly task of dredging the pond floor to remove all the duck-poo debris and take the base back to the clay. George Cheshire brought in a digger and dumper truck, and helped and refreshed by the Stockaway residents, more than 20 truck-loads of manure were removed to an arable field offered by Paul Gregory a few hundred metres to the south.

A win-win situation – and the pond has refilled beautifully.

The Streets and Streetlights

The **streetlight** lanterns are owned and maintained by the PC and we pay for the electricity to power them.

The new (2020) heritage-style LED lights have reduced electricity usage and cost, and we are fortunate to be in a fixed-price 3-year contract, so have been insulated from the worst of the electricity price rises so far.

The PC looks after public **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. A third dog bin for the village was installed on Aston Abbots Road this year and the bin on the Fortescue Track was replaced due to damage.

The village roads are not routinely gritted. So grit/salt for the **grit bins** is provided by Bucks Council.

The Grass Verges and other Devolved Services

We continued our Devolved Services contract from Bucks Council, for which we receive a grant.

The PC appoints contractors to carry out grass verge cutting within the 30mph limit, road and pavement weedkilling, sign cleaning, and monitoring of hedges bordering roads.



In 2018, we worked with BBOWT (Bucks, Berks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust) to seed selected verges with wildflowers and manage them differently. It can take up to 5 years for wildflower meadows to establish fully, but there are encouraging signs of many native wildflowers and grasses, plus many more bees, butterflies and other wildlife.

We keep a close eye on their condition, and review them each year, re-seeding as necessary.

what's new?

New dog bin on Aston Abbots Road

paid for by the Parish Council



... and liaises with Buckinghamshire Council

Highways—roads, pavements, verges, footpaths, speed control

Buckinghamshire Council is the local Highways Authority. It has legal responsibility and public liability for all the roads, footways, pavements and footpaths in the county. While parish councils like Weedon now take on grass verges and minor repairs, all other works are down to Bucks.

We work with a Local Area Technician to inform and suggest what we think needs to be done on potholes, drains, signage, kerbs, road surfacing, speed control measures, etc. We can even offer to contribute funds for specific projects. But Bucks Highways make the decisions and carry out the works.



We are talking to Bucks about permanent speed control measures permitted by legislation, and affordable for Weedon. These include upgrading to solar fixed vehicle-activated signs which flash actual speed in red or green and have the best value impact and success in reducing speeds.



Meanwhile, we are doing what we can to stay on top of the worst offenders through Community Speedwatch—averaging two hour-long sessions a week. Everyone caught speeding by the device is noted down and they get letters from the police. Stats show we're getting results, so why not join the team?

Public Footpaths

Weedon's "Village Walk" 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.

In February, two more stiles on one of the outer footpaths to the south of the village were removed and aluminium kissing gates installed. The PC applied for a grant from the Wing and Ivinghoe Community Board and was awarded the full cost of £1,000 (£500 each).

what's new? 2 more gates replace stiles



Planning Liaison

The Parish Council is consulted on every **planning application** for building in Weedon, and on proposed **tree works** in the Conservation Areas. It can respond to Bucks Council (the Planning Authority)

with No Objection, Support, Comment or Object. The PC holds a public planning meeting for each application.

The current Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) classes Weedon as a "smaller village" with relatively poor access to

services and facilities, and 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 for Weedon in this plan.

what's new?

The village gap views are back

The PC was delighted with the planning appeal decision to permit a new house for a village family on half of the Aston Abbots Road 'gap' land, a process supported by the PC and many villagers keen to see the area sympathetically used and restored.

Most of the remaining field will be transferred to the PC, but managed privately under a long-term lease, at no cost to the village. The site has been cleared, the massive conifers along the rear fence are gone, and work has started to erect traditional post-and-rail fencing and plant new native hedges. A new public bench will be installed just off the pavement, so everyone can sit and enjoy the views.

These are truly stunning views—from the road across the Area of Attractive Landscape towards the Chiltern Hills. The contracts will ensure they are retained for community enjoyment forever, while the land will be managed as a bio-diverse open meadow which can never be built on. Thank you to all who are making this possible.



Other Local Government and Police Liaison

Weedon's parish councillors attend meetings of the **Wing and Ivinghoe Community Board**, a forum set up by Bucks Council to bring together parish and unitary councillors and other local organisations in an informal quarterly meeting. It helps the PC stay informed and linked



into projects in the wider local area, and grants can also be applied for (eg. the new footpath gates).

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

Village communications

The secure village **website** is hosted by a local provider and maintained by the PC.

<https://weedonbucks.org.uk>

Community organisations are all featured on the site and update their own sections.

This **Parish Council Report and Update**

is normally published yearly and a copy is delivered free to every home. **Email** is used for community interest information.

The free **Parish Magazine**, produced for the local Anglican church partnership, is distributed monthly by email, with printed copies on special request.

A **Parish Council noticeboard** is at the High Street crossroads. Official notices are posted on it and on the website.

Open noticeboards for use by all are provided here and at the top of East End.

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

WEEDON PARISH COUNCIL

weedonbucks.org.uk

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

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

Phone: 01280 814739

Email:

parishclerk@weedonbucks.org.uk

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

Parish Council Meetings

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

PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

DIRECT SERVICES

- 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) and Village Green Triangle
- Cleaning of Streets and Roadsigns
- Monitoring Public Footpaths, Roads and Pavements to keep clear

CONSULTEE TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

- On planning applications
- On Local Development Plans
- Liaison on Highways, Speed Control

Local Area Buckinghamshire Councillors

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

PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS

Income

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Band D Council Tax	£67.21	£67.21	£67.21
Precept	£13,813	£13,810	£13,920
Other Income	£4,672	£4,575	£3,650

The PC's main INCOME comes from the Weedon parish precept, funded by Council Tax. We decide how much precept to request each year and we have ensured that Weedon households have paid the same amount of village council tax for 12 years. Other income includes a grant for highways devolved services from Bucks Council, graveyard fees, agricultural rent, donations from residents and other one-off grants.

EXPENDITURE includes part-time employment of the Clerk and payment of home office costs. Routine expenditure is mainly on repairs and maintenance—looking after the village. This includes streetlight power and repairs, park equipment repairs, horticultural works to park, pond, graveyard, verges, footpaths and trees, waste and dog bin emptying. Administration costs cover insurance, meeting room rental, the annual audit and hosting the village website, membership of local government organisations and training.

Project expenditure varies each year. In 22/23 it included the Coronation event grant, 2 dog bins, the TPO tree surgery and the pond dredging.

Expenditure

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Clerk & Office	£4,386	£4,049	£3,656
Routine Expenditure	£16,246	£7,522	£13,185
Project Expenditure	£4,536	£1,174	£10,829

Reserves

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Year-End Reserves	£18,318	£25,001	£19,361

The PC has RESERVES from previous years, which we can draw on for new projects and exceptional expenditure. For 23/24 we are budgeting for further speed control measures and graveyard landscaping.

OTHER WEEDON CONTACTS

Weedon Village Association	Catherine Rodnight	01296 641071	Weedon Charities	Wendy Kett	01296 640366
Old Schoolroom	Shirley Bush	01296 641382	Golf Society	Colin Rose	01296 641622 / 07885 201150
Tuesday Club	Judy Nagele	01296 641278	Parish Mag Editor	Saskia Welman	07956 231676
Methodist Chapel	Sarah Gibbs	07545 350035	The Five Elms	Andrew	01296 256057
Chapel Graveyard	Wendy Kett	01296 640366	Weedon Wildlife Group	Sally Jones	01296 641425