

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2026
IN THE MEMORIAL HALL**

In attendance

26 people were in attendance at this meeting.

1. Welcome – Cllr Peter Lawler

Cllr Lawler welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the purpose of it. He thanked Alison Edmonds and Vanessa Butler for this evening's refreshments.

The year has been the usual mix of parish business. We have had an election of a new Council since the last assembly, or should I say non election as again we didn't have enough candidates to force an election. It's a lot cheaper way of forming a council, but unfortunate as it feels as if we lose some of the democratic process.

There was a large change in councillors with a number of the old guard retiring. I believe the new councillors are settling in well and getting used to the limited direct power we have, but at the same time appearing to be responsible if things aren't quite right. As we have so many new members, I appreciate the responsibilities people are taking on from playgrounds to grass cutting inspections, floodwater to speed indicators. Thank you all.

We have agreed a 20 mile per hour zone in the village which will be interesting and hopefully have a positive effect on pedestrian safety in the village. It won't, however, help with the increasing problem of parking in the village. I predict this will be a reoccurring issue for the next few years.

Our relationship with Wiltshire Council appears at some times to be stressed. Despite the good service we get from our local councillor. The roads are a mess and anything we ask for is almost impossible to achieve without significant delays and a request for a financial contribution, even if it is a Wiltshire Council responsibility. I appreciate that money is short, but the reduced service I have seen over the years I have been on the Council is dramatic. This decline includes the value for money we get from the police. Alison Edmonds and I recently met our police community support officer (PCSO) who apparently only works 14 shifts a month, covers a large area and can be called on for other work.

We were approached by Creully, a village in France, to consider forming a friendship group with them as they had already got a connection with the village. Cecil Newton, a long-time resident of Aldbourne, had been working with them since he was involved in relieving them from German occupation after the D-Day landings in the Second World War, so much so that they named their school after him. This group is continuing under the banner of the PC as it works towards running independently.

I must recognise the person who keeps us in order, without whom there would be a far less efficient Counsel. Karen Clay, our Clerk. Thank you, Karen, for the work you put in on Aldbourne's behalf and for the positive way you help run the Council. It's much appreciated.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held Wednesday 24 April 2024

There having been no meeting in 2025, the Minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 24 April 2024 were unanimously accepted as correct.

3. Presentations

Mr S Vaux & Mr T Cherrett – How Wiltshire Community-Led Housing could help to bring affordable housing to Aldbourne.

Mr Steve Vaux spoke about the following in relation to the WCLH, and answered questions about the project from those present at the meeting.

[Link to the Community-Led Housing Website](#)

- The origin of the Rural Housing Enabling Project.
- The involvement of DEFRA & ACRE
- Why Wiltshire has Rural Housing Enablers.
- Integration with Wiltshire Council.
- The impact of the local development plan situation and the removal of funding for Neighbourhood Planning.
- NP alternatives & 'NP Light'
- Settlement design statements
- The Localism Act 2011 & Community-led homes
- The role of Community Land Trusts & Wiltshire Community Land Trust and how having one could bring forward local housing and protect it in perpetuity for residents.
- Historic loss of social rent housing in rural communities.
- What rural parishes can do to ensure they get housing that meets local needs.
- Section 106 Agreements and why it should be made possible for parishes to be involved in deciding what these contain. Currently, the details are not known until agreed between the developer and Wiltshire Council.
- Local lettings agreements in a rural housing provider context.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (25% of CIL with Made NP).
- The Lottage Farm Development and how the parish could work with Wiltshire Council to make sure the proposed affordable homes at this site remain affordable.

The first steps for Aldbourne is for a group of residents to come together (either with the PC or with its support) to work towards the goal of bringing affordable homes to the village for Aldbourne residents. Finding land which could be purchased at lower market value would be a key part of this. Mr Vaux and Mr Cherrett are available to help and provide guidance once a group is formed.

Cllr R Warren – Your safety and how the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) are helping to tackle speeding through Aldbourne.

Cllr Rob Warren gave a presentation showing the SIDs statistics and how the different modes are being used to have a positive impact on lowering speeds. As well as a demonstration of the different modes on one of the units.

He has worked with Elan City to ensure that the SIDs all pick up vehicles within the speed limits, rather than outside them. He is working to set up school modes on all units, which can be programmed once a year. With solar panels and battery monitors on all units, it will be possible to monitor them quickly with the only other input needing to be the downloading of the statistics once a month. These statistics are sent to the police.

4. Reports from village organisations /groups and Wiltshire Council

Aldbourn Carnival

The Carnival made a profit from last year's event and was able to provide eight disbursements around the village. There will be an article in the next Dabchick about who these went to.

The first event of this year's carnival will be the choosing of the Royal Family, which will once again be held on the same day as the Churches Together Fete on 27 June. If anyone is interested in being part of the Royal Family, please get in touch with the Carnival Committee.

There will be many of the normal events in the build up to the Carnival on 5 September. The Race Night in memory of Steve Goddard was a great success last year and will be run again this year. All funds raised once will again be donated to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. It is great to have the Blue Boar on board this year, and they are hoping to run a comedy evening to help raise funds. Keep an eye out for posters and on social media for details of all this year's events.

The backtrack (Grasshills) is once again showing signs of wear and tear and volunteers to help make some repairs would be appreciated. As people are probably aware, the Carnival Committee did look at removing this section of the parade due to the potholes and uneven surface making it dangerous for the floats. However, there was such strong feeling about not using this route, that the Committee reconsidered the decision. Whilst Lottage Road is a popular route, the track back to the centre of the village continues to present a safety issue every year.

Friends of Aldbourne Band

Since 2009 the Friends have been the main fund raisers, raising over £180,000, which has allowed the band to continue to perform at such a high level – currently they are ranked 15th in the world. Membership is a minimum of £10 a year, which gives you three newsletters a year, reduced entry to one concert a year and low cost transport to some venues.

The band were West of England Champions last year. This year they were second only to Flowers Band (based in Gloucester), who went on to be crowned European Champions.

Heritage Group/Centre

Following some private tours during the winter, the summer opening hours are now in force on Wednesday afternoons (1.00 pm – 4.00 pm), and Saturday, Sundays & bank holiday Mondays (11.00 am – 4.30 pm). The US tours will start in May and run until September. Last year over 3,000 people visited the Heritage Centre, which is more than visited the Swindon museum. There are over 100 members, and more are always welcome. There are regular monthly talks and videos of these are available after each one. It has been just over 10 years since the Heritage Centre opened.

Children's Book Group

The Aldbourne Children's Book Group has been running for over 50 years and is a member of the Federation of Children's Book Groups. It brings families and children together and promotes the joy of reading. There are currently 49 families as members. Funding for the group comes from membership and book sales. Christmas, summer picnics and pre-school sessions are just some of the events that are held. The group is working to welcome and encourage new members. One of the new membership options is a legacy membership of £15. This allows those with a love of books, but no children, to support the group. 2026 is the National Year of Reading and the group hopes to be able to run some special events as part of this, such as author led ones.

Tennis Club

The Aldbourne tennis club has raised funds to resurface the tennis court. This will revitalise the court and the use of it.

5. Questions or general discussions

Comments in relation to a Community Land Trust and possible locations that could be used to build affordable housing in Aldbourne.

The Parish Council were thanked for everything they do for the village. Aldbourne is an amazing community, and the Parish Council is a part of that.

Cllr Lawler thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.38 pm.

Signed by Chairman of the meeting _____ 28 April 2027

Minutes taken by the Parish Council Clerk