

Minutes of the
WESTMILL ANNUAL COMMUNITY (PARISH) MEETING
held on **Wednesday 13 MAY 2026**
at **7pm** in **Westmill Village Hall**

Present: Cllrs Jim Beaven, Luke Clifton, Steve Cowler, Sue Debono, Tom McMullen (Chairman)
In attendance: Sarah Kubica (Parish Clerk), County Cllr Terry Smith, 7 members of the public

26/1 APOLOGIES

To receive and accept apologies for absence
Apologies accepted from District Cllr Aubrey Holt

26/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

To approve the Minutes of the Westmill Annual Parish Meeting held on [Wednesday 22 May 2025](#) as an accurate record of proceedings
Approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings

26/3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

To receive the Westmill annual report

Cllr McMullen welcomed everyone to the meeting and was pleased to see representatives from village groups. He then set out, in general terms, the work of the parish council over the past year. He highlighted the involvement of the Greg Trust in the village and how this trust had responsibility for matters that would otherwise usually fall to the Parish. The Trust and its Trustees were thanked for their continuing service to the village.

There were 4 formal parish council meetings. The Council numbers 5 (with room for a 6th) and is supported by Sarah Kubica as the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. Sarah is the sole employee and remains a great asset. She is also assisting other parish councils, which gives WPC the opportunity to learn from the workings and experiences of other parishes.

Much of the council's role is to consider planning applications and this has continued throughout the year. Generally, most of these have passed through the district planning system to receive consent with only a couple of exceptions. The Council has had reason to consider Buntingford applications as the A10 passes through the parish and parishioners are affected by both volume of traffic and risk of accidents. Generally, the Council's position is that the road needs material upgrading before further weight of traffic is permitted from new residential development. Residents continue to be concerned about the risk of accidents on the A10's north junction and the council has had discussions with Highways on temporary measures to improve the visibility of the junction but is awaiting action. The Council continues to report road maintenance to Highways and chase up where appropriate. There have been a number of frustrations in relation to road closures, particularly on Cherry Green Lane which the Council has passed on to the relevant authorities and its contractors.

WPC continues to be responsible for the village green, pump and housing, lime trees (undertaking a material pollarding with the main tree), village defibrillator (battery replaced) and the old phone box.

Low level crime is a fact of modern life from which Westmill is sadly not immune. There has been occasional theft, fly-tipping and this year, a serious incident involving an out-of-control dog. Despite some apparent frustrations from residents about Police engagement, they have been encouraged to report incidents to at least inform crime statistics and apparent resource allocation.

26/4 REPORT FROM EAST HERTS RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

To receive a report and Q&A if Police in attendance
Clerk shared an update: no crimes reported for Cherry Green, one for Westmill on 24/3/26 owner allowing a dog dangerously out of control in a public place. Cllrs reminded of Police

Priorities Setting Forum online meeting 15 May 6.30pm, new priorities likely to include flytipping

26/5 ANNUAL REPORTS

Representatives of Westmill Groups, Clubs or Societies are invited to submit or present a report on their activities throughout the year

Friends of Westmill Church, Jan James

FOWC raises funds for repairs to the fabric of the church building and for maintenance. It can not fund new projects, but can fund future maintenance. The Village Lottery is well supported and has been operating for over 15 years and has helped fund repairs to the perimeter wall, lychgate and stained glass windows. Always welcoming new members who can contact me for info.

Buntingford Festival Choir, Jan James

Is currently rehearsing in St Mary's, Westmill every Thursday at 7pm and is a free choir which includes members from Westmill. Contact: sing@buntingfordfestivalchoir.org

T&M GregTrust, report from Michael McRae

The Greg Trust continues to own and manage various Westmill facilities, including the Village Hall and adjoining cottage, Recreation Field, Children's Playground, village allotments, two almshouses on the village green and two grazing fields. The trust continued to be run by 6 volunteer Trustees throughout the year.

Key Points for 2025-26:

Village Hall – We have been planning over 18 months to carry out a complete repair and renovation of the roof for both the hall and the adjoining cottage. For us to proceed with this work we were successful in obtaining 4 x Grants, including a substantial one from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund, in addition to 2 smaller grants (Bernard Sunley Foundation & Pilgrim Trust). We appointed Whitworth - specialist architect and surveyors (particularly with Listed Buildings) to obtain all the necessary approvals on this Grade II listed building. They will project manage this important project for us. Whitworth's produced a detailed works specification which was put to 5 building companies, for them to TENDER. For this work we selected Ratcliffe & Burrige based in Bishops Stortford. Work will commence on Monday 20th July 2026 and it is estimated to take 8 – 10 weeks. This will also include fitting improved insulation in the roof to improve the heat loss. It will involve the entire building to have scaffolding being erected and the roof work will be done in sections commencing with the hall section and ending with the cottage. Another key point with the Village Hall is we have changed the older radiator heaters for new Dimplex Quantum storage heaters. We also had a new dual tariff meter fitted allowing the use of overnight cheaper rate electricity for the new storage heaters. This was made possible as we received a grant from EHC to cover these costs, with the objective to run more efficient heaters and improve the building insulation which will happen when the roof work is done.

Village Hall Cottage - Our tenants of over 40 years moved to more appropriate accommodation in Buntingford at the end October 2025. We have taken the opportunity to upgrade and improve the interior of the cottage, with a new kitchen, bathroom, electric heating system, floor coverings and a complete redecoration throughout. We are now seeking a new tenant.

Playground - The Playground continues to be popular with children using the play equipment, along with being used fortnightly by Westmill croquet club which meet on a Wednesday morning. Although the trustees carry out regular risk assessments, an annual independent inspection is arranged on our behalf by EHC. We again received an overall 'Low Risk' status.

Allotments - We have a total of 14 plots, and all were allocated throughout 2025 and into this year.

GT Meetings - The trustees continue to hold formal quarterly meetings, but actions are constantly dealt with between all our tenants, hall users, WFC and others.

This concludes the report from the TMGT for the year May 2025 – May 2026

St Mary the Virgin, Westmill 2025, Revd Sarah Bagnall, Assistant Curate

Resources: Revd Sarah Bagnall: the "new" Curate joined during the year, Mr Matt Hails: new Reader-in-training joins the current team of Rector: Revd Kirsty Wainwright, Assistant Priest: Revd Norman Jones, Reader: Mrs Sandra Jones, Retired Priest: Venerable George Ansah
All contribute to services & activities in the Parish

Parish Provision: Weekly Services on 4 of 5 Sundays each month, Morning Prayer on Weds at 9am, Special services throughout year (notably: Ash Weds/Maundy Thurs/Ascension/Christmas various services plus Harvest & Easter

Children's Activities: Little Lambs - picnics in the Summer / weekly meeting 10-11:30: Bible Story, singing, play & refreshments; Halloween Treats handed out from church; Choc Stop - Benefice activity outside St Peters after school on a Thursday 3-4pm

Church as a Venue: Hosting events Concerts, Music Recitals, Art Show, Choir Rehearsals

Building: 4 Phase project: Phase 1 almost done - creating teapoint & welcome area, Phase 2 approved by Diocese (planning), Now just need to work on funding (lottery), Clock repair - 12 O'clock is back at North, Yew tree maintenance

Thanks: Grateful to community for: Support opening & closing church each day, Churchyard maintenance, All volunteers who help keep an eye on the premises, Fundraising - Friends of Westmill, Sue Phipps as Churchwarden

achurchnearyou.com/church/7851

United Benefice of Aspenden, Buntingford, and Westmill

Community Events, Melanie Mason

Alfresco Friday, held on the first Friday of the month is continuing through the summer in Jackson's Meadow and is a great way to meet fellow residents. A quiz night is scheduled in the village hall in October and other plans are in the pipeline. Christmas Light the Night was cancelled last year as there were not enough households available to participate. Thank you to everyone who has been taking their inkjet cartridges to the telephone kiosk recycling collection point. The first lot of money raised from Think-Inks was spent on Christmas decorations in 2024 and some of the present balance of £38.60 will fund the woodland community area in The Twitchell.

Westmill Nursery, emailed from Sandra Hawkins

Over the past year, Westmill Nursery has continued to support a wide range of families and their children, many of whom travel to us from Buntingford, Puckeridge, and the surrounding villages. Although we advertise locally and online, a significant number of new families still find us through word of mouth, which is a testament to the strong reputation the nursery holds within the community.

This year has been a positive one, with children thriving in our setting and families engaging closely with us. We remain committed to providing a nurturing, play-rich environment that supports early development and helps children build confidence as they prepare for their next steps.

Looking ahead, the coming year is expected to be a little quieter in terms of numbers. This reflects a wider trend across Hertfordshire, where nurseries are experiencing the impact of a continuing low birth rate. Despite this, we remain focused on maintaining high-quality provision and supporting the families who choose Westmill Nursery.

We continue to make the most of the wonderful resources on our doorstep. The children enjoy regular visits to the nature reserve, where they explore wildlife, seasonal changes, and the natural environment. We also visit the church and take local walks—often heading up to see the horses and donkeys, which is always a highlight for the children.

As ever, we are grateful for the ongoing support of the parish and the wider community.

Westmill remains a very special place for young children to learn, grow, and feel part of village life.

26/6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Proposed: Wednesday 12 May 2027