

GREAT ALNE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of Great Alne Parish Council was held at 7pm on Tuesday 20th January 2026 in The Conservatory, Maudslay House, Great Alne Park, Great Alne, B49 6HX.

Present

Cllr Lynn Bowring, Cllr Ian Millard, Cllr Louise Bennett and Cllr Ian Taylor.
Mrs Gill Forman, Executive Officer for GAPC also attended.

OPEN FORUM AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR

a) **Representations from residents** (3 mins max per speaker)

Bob Larbey raised the issue of customer parking at The Mother Huff Cap. Cars are being parked on the pavement outside the pub and the grass verge opposite the pub. This is causing problems for residents. Other residents at the meeting agreed with Mr Larbey, and felt the situation was getting worse. Cllr Bowring said there was little the Parish Council could do and it was really a police issue. Cllr Millard said he would speak to police officer Gary Strain who co-ordinates the Speed Watch Groups. The grass verge opposite the pub is owned by Orbit and residents pay a maintenance fee to Orbit for this area, but often contractors are unable to mow the verge due to parked cars. Julie Gardner, a tenant of Orbit offered to telephone Orbit and ask if there was anything they could do. It was also suggested that a Councillor could speak to the owners of the pub to see if they could educate their customers on parking more considerably.

Roger Hawkins gave an update on the Chatty Café. The café started up again last October. Roger and Julie Gardener are the volunteers who run the café. Between 10 and 12 people attend the sessions. It is mostly retired villagers, who enjoy the café, mix well and gain a real benefit from attending. At the moment there is one session a month, Roger and Julie would like to increase this to two sessions a month, this would require more volunteers. The café is funded by the Council until March 2026. Roger asked the Council if there would be funding after March 2026. Each session costs about £60. In principle the Councillors would like to continue supporting the café in some form but need to look at the Council budget for 2026 to see what would be affordable. Cllr Millard suggested it might be an option for the Chatty Café to move away from the Council and then alternative funding maybe available, for example from the Parish Charity.

b) **County Councillor's Report**

The Executive Officer informed the Councillors she had emailed Councillor Cooper asking if he was attending the meeting and if not, could she have a report to read out at the meeting. She had received no reply and no report.

c) **District Councillor's Report**

The Executive Officer informed the Councillors she had emailed Councillor Holmes asking if he was attending the meeting and if not, could she have a report to read out at the meeting. She had received no reply and no report.

d) **Footpaths Project**

Bob Larbey gave a report. There is a difference between Bob's expenditure figures and WCC's funding figures. WCC figures are £342.96 greater than Bob's: he believes this is to do with VAT, WCC are looking into this. Also £24.72 is missing from WCC figures but Bob has been reimbursed for this expenditure. There is a very muddy section of footpath from Park Lane running parallel to Henley Road, about 20 metres (Path 180/AL100/2). Bob suggested a solution would be to purchase some mudcontrol slabs, they are plastic slabs that clip together. The costs for these would be about £566.00. Another solution is to buy bags of stone to be spread on the path, this would be very labour intensive as it would be difficult to get the stone to the path. The cost for this would be about £150.00. So, the most practical option would be the mudcontrol slabs. Bob's suggestion to pay for these was to reallocate the £500.00 in the Council budget, earmarked as a contribution to a new handrail on the church path, back to the footpaths project. Cllr Millard said conversations were being had regarding the handrail and hopefully a decision on the handrail would be made before the next Parish Council meeting, then the Councillors will know if the £500.00 will be required by the church or if it can be reallocated to the Footpaths Project. Bob is working with Cllr Taylor to create a webpage on the new GAPC website for recommended walking routes around the Parish. Bob felt it would be good to have a routine maintenance programme for footpaths with a schedule of work throughout the year.

e) **Great Alne Park Update**

The Executive Officer reported she had emailed Adam, the manager of GAP for an update. He had replied stating there was no update as the building work is now completed. This item will be removed from future agenda's

f) **Shed Project Update**

The Executive Officer informed the Councillors that the first choice of shed was out of stock when the order was placed, a second option for the shed was a different colour to the granted planning permission and so could not be ordered. Graham Knight who is involved in the project was unable to attend the Parish Council meeting, so hopefully there will be an update at the next Parish Council meeting.

g) **Police Surgery's 2026 & Alcester South SNT update**

The Executive Officer reported that the Police Surgery dates were on the notice boards, the Parish Council Facebook page and had been sent to all Councillors. Cllr Millard said he would try attend the first surgery on the

28th of January to talk to the police officers about the car parking of The Mother Huff Cap customers. If he is unable to attend Cllr Bowring will attend. There were no other updates.

AGENDA:

1. Co-Option of a Parish Councillor

Councillors heard a presentation from a candidate who had indicated that they would like to be considered for co-option. Councillors then asked the candidate some questions. Cllr Bowring adjourned the meeting for the public and the candidate to be excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Co-option Policy. Councillors then voted to co-opt a new Councillor. The meeting resumed and Cllr Bowring announced that Councillors had voted to co-opt Julie Gardner as a Parish Councillor for Great Alne. Cllr Gardner signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed by the Executive Officer, and she then joined the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

None

3. Declaration of interests in items on this agenda

Cllr Gardner declared an interest in item 7 on the agenda, and will take no part in that agenda item

4. To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 18th November 2025.

Minutes of the November meeting were approved by the Councillors

Action: Minutes to be signed by the Chairman and filed by the Executive Officer

5. Councillors Reports

To receive reports and where required approve action/expenditure

a. Flooding & Highways

Cllr Taylor reported that nearly all the tasks that had been set were completed. WCC had been in the Parish several times to carry out work, including clearing the ditch in Stroat Lane. WCC are due to return on the 4th and 5th of February to clear a blocked culvert running from Appleby Close to the Memorial Hall. WCC are due to increase the size of the pipe on the S bend by Alne Cote on the 23rd of February to alleviate flooding there. On the 25th of February WCC are due to return again to excavate the ditch on Pelham Lane which should resolve the flooding issues there. The Drain Guardians are due to meet early in the new year. WCC have been asked by Cllr Taylor to schedule future routine road sweeping and drain maintenance post winter, post-harvest and post autumn leaf fall. On the 8th of January Cllr Taylor attended the first meeting of the Flood Parish Collaboration Group organised by Henley in Arden Council. 13 Parish Councils attended. The Councils have a common interest in managing the flooding along the catchment area of the River Alne.

b. Community Speed Watch/Road Safety next steps

Cllr Millard reported that the Speed Watch Group has not been very active recently due to the dark mornings and evenings and weather conditions, but it is hoped it will start up again in the next few weeks. Dylan White from WCC has confirmed to Cllr Millard that the £10K from the County Councillors budget is still available for road safety projects in the Parish, but WCC have rejected a number of suggestions that have been put forward including Vehicle Activated Speed Signs, and chevrons marked on the road as the village does not meet the criteria for these items. Gateways into the Village with road marking are being looked at by WCC minor works team.

c. GAKMH update

Cllr Millard reported that the next meeting of the committee is in February, and that the Christmas events held at the hall were very successful.

d. Recreation Ground

Cllr Bennett reported that the new posts and caps had been installed on the toddler swing, and new caps installed on the bird's nest swing. The repairs to the picnic bench have not been completed yet as some of the old bolts are proving difficult to remove.

e. Defibrillator

Cllr Bennett reported that the annual support package for the defibrillator maintenance would cost £196.00 plus VAT. The date the defibrillator was installed will be needed by the contractor. Councillors approved the support package expenditure.

f. Coronation Copse and Community Orchard

Cllr Bennett reported that the water tower is full, a delivery of chippings from the tree surgeon is due to be delivered, and the plaque for former Cllr Paul Clarke's tree has been removed for refurbishment.

g. Great Alne Primary School Update

Cllr Bowring reported that we are awaiting the results of the consultation which ended on the 12th of December 2025. Cllr Bowring attended a WCC Council meeting where he hoped to present a statement from

Great Alne Parish Council regarding the possible school closure but unfortunately was not able to read the statement as the school closure was not an agenda item at the meeting.

h. **GAPC Website Update**

Cllr Taylor reported that a draft skeleton of the proposed new website was sent to Councillors for comments. SDC's IT team will support the project at no cost to the Parish Council. One idea is to have photographs of the village on the website which could be achieved by holding a photographic competition. Volunteer Bob Larbey is helping Cllr Taylor with the website project.

i. **Local Government Reform Update**

Cllr Bowring explained that the Government's objective is to replace SDC and WCC with one body. WCC and Rugby Council are in favour of one body for the whole of the Warwickshire, SDC and WDC are in favour of 2 bodies, one for the North of the County and one for the South of the County. There will be a statutory consultation in the Spring of 2026 after which the Government will make a decision on which option to adopt. John Metcalf has been appointed by the Government to oversee the process.

j. **Climate Action Group Update**

Cllr Bowring reported the next meeting of the group is on Wednesday the 28th of January, when the action plan will be reviewed.

k. **Former Social Club Update**

The Executive Officer informed the Councillors she had no further updates since the email from the SDC Enforcement Officer on the 8th of December. This email was forwarded to all Councillors when it was received by the Executive Officer.

6. Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy

Cllr Bowring advised Councillors he was still working on amendments to the policy. It was agreed to carry this item over to the next Parish Council meeting in March. **Action: Executive Officer to put on March Agenda**

7. Renewal of Lengthsman Contract

The Executive Officer informed Councillors that the Lengthsman contract expires on the 14th of February 2026. Councillors are very happy with the excellent work of the Lengthsman and therefore approved the renewal of his contract for a further 12 months. Cllr Bennett thanked the Lengthsman for his prompt response to a resident reporting damage to a tree on Stoa Lane. **Executive Officer to Action**

8. Grit Bins & Local Gritting Routes

Cllr Bowring informed Councillors WCC grit all main traffic routes, but Sernal Lane is not part of their gritting route as it is not classed as a main traffic route. Cllr Taylor said there had been 3 serious incidents on Sernal Lane recently and that water running of the fields is part of the problem. It was agreed that Sernal Lane needs to be added onto the Road Safety Programme. Councillors agreed not to obtain extra grit bins as they felt the gritting of Sernal Lane by WCC was the best solution.

9. Clerk working from home allowance

The Executive Officer informed Councillors that HMRC allow Councils to pay a Clerk who works from home £6.00 a "working from home allowance", she asked if Councillors would agree to pay her this allowance. Councillors approved this allowance.

10. Planning applications

- Application reference: 26/00018/LDP 11 Appleby Close Great Alne Alcester B49 6HJ. Application Type: Certificate Lawful Development-Proposed. The proposal is for the erection of a single-storey rear extension to the existing dwelling. The extension will project from the original rear wall and will be constructed with a pitched roof. The eaves height will not exceed 3 metres and the overall height will remain below 4 metres. External walls and roof coverings will be finished in materials to match the existing dwelling. The rear elevation will incorporate glazed doors and/or windows to provide access to the garden and natural light. No alterations are proposed to site access, boundary treatments, or drainage, which will remain as existing.

Councillors consider the Application reference: 26/00018/LDP and agreed a "No objection" response to the application

Between meetings, GAPC has submitted the following responses (further to email meetings):

- Application reference: 25/02743/FUL 12 Nightingale Close Great Alne Alcester B49 6PE. Demolition of existing conservatory and construction of new side extension and conversion of part of existing garage. **NO OBJECTION SDC RESPONSE – PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED WITH CONDITIONS**

- Application reference:25/03081/Tree The Spinney Henley Road Great Alne B49 6HX. Notification for works to trees in CA. **NO REPRESENTATION**

Councillors noted the responses to applications: 25/02743/FUL and 25/03081/Tree

11. Accounts

a) To agree the Budget 2026/2027 of £53850

Councillors approved the Budget for 2026/2027 of £53850

b) To agree to request precept from SDC for 2026/2027 of £44500

Councillors approved to request from SDC a precept for 2026/2027 of £44500 **Executive Officer to Action**

c) Progress against budget report

The Executive Officer reported to Councillors that progress against budget is on track. GAPC spend is approximately 75% of budget three quarters of the way through the year

d) Accounts information

Councillors approved the report provided by the Executive Officer for the Payment of Accounts from 13th October to 31st December 2025

e) Update on credit card application

The Executive Officer informed Councillors that on the 2nd of January Unity Bank confirmed to her that they had all the correct paperwork and would process the application

f) Thomas Fox contract renewal as per budget: 16 visits to playing field and 8 visits to verges.

Councillors approved the renewal of the Thomas Fox contract with 16 visits to the playing field and 8 visits to the verges.

- **Bank Account Balances @ 31 December 2025:**

- Unity Trust Current Account T1 ending 0348: £4164.36
- Unity Trust Instant Access Account (reserves) ending 0351: £39696.19

Money received since last meeting:

- CIL payment December 2025 £180.00.

Councillors noted the bank balance and the CIL payment

12. Discuss and approval meeting dates for 2026.

Councillors approved the following meeting dates for 2026/27.

Tuesday 17th March 2026

Wednesday 20th May 2026 Annual Meeting, Parish Assembly & General Meeting

Tuesday 21st July 2026

Tuesday 15th September 2026

Tuesday 17th November 2026

Tuesday 19th January 2027

Tuesday 16th March 2027

13. Date and venue of next meeting.

The next GAPC General Meeting will take place at 7pm on Tuesday the 17th of March 2026 in The Conservatory, Maudslay House, Great Alne Park

Cllr Taylor gave his apologies for this meeting

The Meeting ended at 9.20pm