

TOCKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON
Wednesday 22nd April 2026

Present: Councillor D Kirby; Chair, Cllr K Woolnough, Cllr J Marshall, Cllr Janet Nicholls, Wiltshire Councillor Allison Bucknell, Rita Harris (note taker)

Also Present: Kris Dickens Village Hall Committee Chair, PC Mike Gassner RWB Police, Janet Newman

NOTICE OF MEETING – Public Notice of the meeting is given in accordance with Schedule 12, para 10 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972.

ANNUAL PARISH MINUTES

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Cllr Ian Carter, Emily Bourne and Mandy Cook.

2. **To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 2025**
Minutes from 9th April 2025 Annual Parish Meeting were signed as a true record of that meeting and agreed unanimously by those present at today's meeting who had been present at 9th April 2025 meeting.

JM proposed KW seconded. Unanimously agreed. DK signed the minutes.

3. **Chair's Report** - to receive a Report from the Chair of the Parish Council on the Parish Council's activities for the last year.

Cllr Diana Kirby, Chair of Tockenham Parish Council, read her annual report:-

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT – 2025-2026

This is the meeting where the Parish Council reports on its activities throughout the year – and the public have the opportunity to ask questions.

We also invite other village organisations to this meeting – so that they can give their own updates – and we can look at combined activities.

First, I would just like to tell you about the members of the Parish Council. Because of the size of Tockenham, we are only entitled to 5 Councillors.

Unfortunately, during the course of last year, we lost both Nick Polkinghorne and Richard Walker due to work commitments – but they have been ably replaced by Ian Carter and Janet Nicholls. We welcome them both.

As well of the other duties of a Councillor, we each have a personal responsibility. These are as follows –

Me – Chair, admin and general communication

Kevin – Vice-Chair and Highways

Julie – Play Area

Ian – Rights of Way

Janet – Special project on War Memorial

Now, let me explain the situation of the clerk! Emily Bourne joined as Parish Clerk (and Financially Responsible Officer) some 15 months ago – but she is currently on a well-deserved break – but Rita, our previous clerk, has offered to fill the role for this meeting. So welcome Rita – and thank you.

The tasks of a Parish Council can be quite varied. In the grand scheme of things, Tockenham is a very small parish – but the responsibilities are the same.

PLANNING – all planning applications within the parish are passed to the local council for comment – and we look to assess the impact any application may have on the surrounding area. (Although W C Planning Department consider the comments of the local council – they do not necessarily act upon them!)

This year the following applications were either resolved or submitted –

- Spinners End, Primrose Hill – Retrospective application for erection of 1.7 m fence, a shed, a recessed entrance double gate and a double garage to replace the existing one.
P C supported, W C approved
- Broad Oak Corner – erection of agricultural building and assorted engineering operations for private way, hardstanding and build.
Prior Notification. Approval not required.
- Hares-brook Farm – Prior Notification approval for 3-bay open fronted portal framed agricultural building - application awaiting validation but no comments from P C required. Also still awaiting application for hardstanding entrance. (The barn will do away with several units spread over the field. 5 of units were unlawful. Van is for use as welfare unit.)
- Glebe House – application for extension to existing garage.
No comments from P C.
- Outside of our Parish –
Resubmission of application – land to North of 34-39 Clyffe Pypard – change of use to form a 3 pitch Travellers caravan site with erection of Day Room and boundary fencing.
Initially refused.
P C objected
November appeal dismissed and enforcement notice upheld.

FINANCE/BUDGET 25/26

Please see budget sheet attached.

After saving for many years, this was the year that we eventually replaced the Play Equipment at a cost of £29,892. Thanks must be given to Bradenstoke Solar Farm Trust – who donated £9,007 towards it! (More about equipment from Julie later.)

Other noticeable expenditures during the last year have been the clerk's salary, PAYE, Community First Insurance, village flowers, WALC subscription, website subscription and donation to parish magazine.

Above this, we continue to put money aside each year for general requirements for community projects e.g. possible highways works etc.

Current reserves stand at –

£1,904 (with more to be added for 2026/2027)

We are pleased to say that we had kept the precept for 2025/2026 year at £12,000

I will now pass over to Kevin who will give you an update on, probably, the biggest area of the P C workload – Highways.

Now we will hear from Julie who will give us an update on the Play Area.

And next to Ian – who is just finding his way round the Rights of Way role.

And finally, to our newest Councillor – Janet – who is working on a project clarifying the issue of the War Memorial.

There are two main areas that we need to cover – and which have been quite time-consuming – but first, I should mention the other day-to-day activities we get involved in.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Communication – we pride ourselves in keeping the community informed on important matters – which can be anything from meeting notices to temporary road closures.

Information is communicated by the village email system, on noticeboards, in the parish magazine or on the P C website. This website contains a mountain of information on the parish council – so please do consult it – www.tockenhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Area Board Meetings - There are various meetings within our Area Board Group that all parishes are encouraged to attend. The actual Area Board meeting is held bi-monthly and provides information gathering and networking opportunities. We try to ensure that Tockenham is always represented. At this point – I would like to remind other village organisations that the Area Board does hand out grants for local need – usually for a material requirement. So, if you do need help with anything – it would be worth putting in an application.

Local Highways and Footways Information Group – This Group has a budget each year to spend on small works within our A B. The priorities for these works are decided by the Councillors who attend the quarterly meetings.

Community Care Group - this group came about from the Priorities set for the whole Area Board. It encompasses the health and well-being of the elderly. The first task was to create a hard-copy leaflet detailing "What's on" in the various parishes within the Board – but it also gives a hard copy list of important and useful numbers for the elderly. (E.g. Alzheimer's Society) The idea being to help those without computers! The leaflet has just been updated– but I will again forward it by email – and leave hard copies with various members of the parish. I will also put a copy in the Hall and all the noticeboards. I hear a lot of other useful information from this Group – and will try to keep you all updated.

Flowers – the parish council continue to pay for the village flowers and prizes for the Fair Flower Basket competition. Our grateful thanks to Julie for all of her hard work in keeping the village looking pretty – and to the others who help with the watering etc. The village really does appreciate it.

Parish Magazine donation – Since last year, the P C now budget to give a donation towards this to ensure this important communication continues.

Litter Picks – We try to hold a Spring and Autumn Litter Pick – to keep the lanes tidy. The community get involved and seem to enjoy doing it. We always finish with a social cuppa! Christmas tree Light Up – this was started a couple of years ago – and has proved very popular. It provides a reason to get together with friends and neighbours – and the P C work together with Church and help from VHC making it a real community event.

Now, let's return to the two extra areas that I mentioned earlier.

The first is the **Tockenham Emergency Plan** – of which I am very proud.

A few months ago, I handed over Chairmanship of this Group to Kevin – because, to be honest, it made sense! So, I am going to hand over to him for the update.

The final area came as a lovely surprise – it is meaning a lot of work – but it will be so beneficial to the village. Last Spring, I received an email from Mr David Barnes – making an **offer of the Village Hall to the people of Tockenham** with the Parish Council as being Sole Trustee. This meant, initially, forming a Charity – called The David Barnes Community Hall Trust. With an enormous amount of help from Sonyia – complete with writing a Constitution, this has been done and we are now officially a Charity.

Obviously we cannot manage without the assistance of the current Village Hall Committee who are delegated to continue the day-to-day running of the Hall. The members have all had training on the implications and needs of the Charity – and we have had several meetings with all members, and with a sub group of joint PC and VHC members to discuss the way forward. It is vital that we have close communication.

We have appointed a solicitor to negotiate the closing of the current lease and the taking over of the ownership of the Hall to the Charity. Thanks to Ian who has taken care of this area for us.

We have had a survey of the Hall to see what we are faced with structurally.

We will work with the VHC to cover necessary works – and hopefully find the money for same – over next 6 years.

We have also had the onerous task of opening a new Charity Bank Account. What a palaver! My thanks to Kevin, Jon and Emily for all of their patience on this! It will happen.

So as to avoid any potential Conflict of Interest between the PC and the Charity – it was decided that there would be separate Chairs. Kevin was voted to be the Chair of Charity. It is important for total transparency.

There is a way to go – but an exciting and worthwhile new development for the village.

That is all from us - except, if anyone should have any queries at all regarding Parish Council matters – please do not hesitate to contact one of the councillors.

We will now hear updates from the other village groups.

Cllr Diana Kirby
Chair, Tockenham Parish Council

4. Parish Council's Accounts and Budget 2025-26

Precept	£12,000.00	
Vat refund	£4,177.00	
Village Hall Committee		
Community First Grant (radios)	£290.00	
Community First Grant (play park)	£9,007.00	
Donations (Village Fair)	£300.00	
Total	£25,774.00	
Expenditure	Budget 25/26	Spend 25/26
Community First insurance	£460.00	£505.71
Community First Subscription	£55.00	£50.00
WALC subscription	£125.00	£106.64
GOV.UK Domain Fees	£80.00	£36.00
ICO registration/membership	£40.00	£47.00
TEEC	£270.00	£215.40
Donation to Community Magazine	£300.00	£300.00
Sub Total	£1,330.00	£1,260.75
Clerks salary	£1,770.00	£1,919.89
HMRC Clerks PAYE	£470.00	£479.97
Clerks Expenses	£90.00	£51.00
Payroll costs	£90.00	£153.00
Sub Total	£2,420.00	£2,603.86

Cllrs Stationery & equipment	£40.00	£0.00
Internal Audit	£80.00	£0.00
Sub Total	£120.00	£0.00
Playing Field Repairs	£700.00	£42.00
Play equipment replacement	£2,500.00	£29,892.00
Sub Total	£3,200.00	£29,934.00
Mower Fuel	£50.00	£23.73
Mower Service	£100.00	£27.00
Sub Total	£150.00	£50.73
D. Barnes rent (Hall rent)	£4.00	£0.00
Sub Total	£4.00	£0.00
Community Led Plan Projects	£4,000.00	£4,249.90
Emergency Plan	£200.00	£433.07
Sub Total	£4,200.00	£4,682.97
Road signage	£0.00	£0.00
Sub Total	£0.00	£0.00
Noticeboard Restoration	£250.00	£0.00
Materials for War Memorial	£50.00	£0.00
Poppy Appeal	£30.00	£20.00
Flagpole refurbishment	£40.00	£0.00
Sub Total	£370.00	£20.00
Village Flowers	£350.00	£188.00
Village Fair (Prizes)	£40.00	£25.68
Litter Pick	£10.00	£0.00
Sub Total	£400.00	£213.68
Training	£150.00	£0.00
Sub Total	£150.00	£0.00
Gifts	£100.00	£38.10
Sub Total	£100.00	£38.10
Total	<u>£12,444.00</u>	<u>£38,804.09</u>

5. Reports from Parish Council Subgroups and Committees:

Cllr Kevin Woolnough gave the following report on Highways:-

Tockenham Parish Council – Highways report – Period April 2025 to April 2026

The Parish Council (PC) continues to strive to improve our local highways and despite some recent requested repairs, deterioration of our C120 and C130 is of constant concern. We are regularly in communication with Wiltshire Council (WC) Highways and Drainage Teams, and I would like to thank our Wiltshire Councillor Allison Bucknell for her support in helping me with the communication process.

WC in dealing with the County's Pothole crisis have suspended their Parish Steward service with no indication as to when this will be re-introduced. Unfortunately, we no longer have him to do minor works or fill minor potholes. This is an exceptionally worthwhile service and one which we hope will resume as soon as possible.

In requesting an update on the installation of 20mph signs on Orchard Lane and the main part of the Village the PC were advised Feb 2026 that formal advertisement for the proposed speed limit change is imminent.

Flooding has occasionally recurred over the Autumn /Winter period at the junction of the C120 and Preston Lane. The PC continue to try and address this long-term issue with the WC Drainage Team. A Vactor visit in February did blast clean drainage pipes and remove blockages.

Tockenham Wick (Cheeseley Hill C76) requested verge run off work and associated works were due 7th to 17th April and we hope the road will be restored to a more user-friendly condition.

The PC has read the GG 104 Safety Risk Assessment on the A3102 at Primrose Hill Junction. It has raised concerns, but the PC have been advised that no additional works or changes are likely to be implemented.

Minor flooding occurred again during the Winter however inspections soon after showed no drainage blockages. The PC recognises that the Drainage System needs regular management through reporting ensuring the system is regularly cleaned out allowing any minor flooding to clear quickly. Where it is recognised that the system was designed and installed differently to how it would be now its condition is acceptable to WC and would not merit financing a change.

As in previous years our verges along the C120, C130 and C76 will be scheduled for cutting between September and December with visibility splays receiving a trim as and when WC deem it necessary.

*Cllr Kevin Woolnough
Highways rep, Tockenham Parish Council*

Cllr Kevin Woolnough gave the following report on the Parish Council Emergency Plan:-

Parish Council Emergency Planning – Annual Report April 2025- April 2026

The Tockenham Emergency Plan is now firmly established and is subject to annual reviews and updates.

The Plan provides necessary information and instructions as to how and who would set up the Tockenham Emergency Contact Hub (ECH) located in the Village Hall with alternate locations should they be required at Greenway Farm and Manor Farm.

During the past year considerable progress has been made to continue to increase and encourage Parish resilience in the event of an emergency.

Tockenham held its first simulated emergency exercise attended by 25-30 parishioners. The exercise allowed the Emergency Committee to set up and experience a working ECH and its equipment. Scenarios were presented to the hub operators whereby they could practice and think through the actions required for a suitable and safe outcome. Volunteers helped provide life like emergency situations. Lessons were learned and administration and equipment have been updated.

Parish residents have attended Defibrillator, Flood, First Aid and equipment training sessions and a further exercise is planned for 2027.

As Chair of the Emergency Planning Committee I would like to on behalf of the Parish Council thank Mr Bill Moore for his help, guidance and enthusiasm in assisting us in establishing the Emergency plan and arranging the recent First Aid training.

In addition, he with myself have established good links with Wiltshire Councils Local Resilience Forum who invited us to present and lecture to other Wiltshire Parishes at one of their zoom training sessions giving our experience on establishing an ECH and Emergency plan. Following this we hosted at the Village Hall a further lecture and demonstration as to how our 'hub' is set up.

We also attended at; RWB Town Council's request, an advisory meeting on how they may wish to utilise our experiences in establishing their own Committees, Emergency Plan and ECH.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Richard Walker for allowing us to use Greenway Farm and Mr Andrew Gaisford and Mr Bob Gaisford for allowing us to use Manor Farm as alternate Emergency Contact Hubs.

*Cllr Kevin Woolnough
Chair Parish Council Emergency Planning Committee*

Cllr Julie Marshall gave the following report on the Playground:-

It has been a busy year for Tockenham playing field! All of the old play equipment has been removed and replaced with new equipment.

All of the equipment has been safety tested, with ongoing safety checks on a monthly basis. The playing field is mown weekly by a group of volunteers from the village.

Previously there was an issue with subsidence reported near the slide and since the new play equipment has been installed this is no longer an issue.

*Cllr Julie Marshall
Play Area rep, Tockenham Parish Council*

Cllr Diana Kirby read the following report on behalf of Cllr Ian Carter on Rights of Way:-

A summary was provided regarding Ian's role on Rights of Way. Part of the role is to arrange the Spring Walk; which this year will be held on Sunday 10th May 2026 followed by a ploughman's meal at the Village Hall.

*Cllr Ian Carter
Rights of Way rep, Tockenham Parish Council*

Cllr Janet Nicolls gave the following report on the War Memorial:-

Annual Parish Meeting – 22.04.26 – Summary

I joined the Parish Council (PC) in January 2026 and have been getting familiar with some of the processes/procedures that the role entails.

As a first project and continuing from Councillor Woolnough, I have been looking into the Tockenham Village War Memorial (TVWM) – following up a request from a resident in the village who thought the WM could do with some TLC.

Before we can do this we need to understand the custodianship of the WM which sits on private land but the Landowner considers he does not own it.

Having spoken and corresponded with various parties, i.e. The War Memorial Trust Conservation (WMTC) and having been online to the WMTC and looked further into the ownership of the WM, also the Imperial War Museum for any records held, it seems as the records are voluntary it would appear no records have been recorded of the TVWM regarding custodianship.

The warmemorialonline.org.uk website lists the Tockenham Grade 2 Listed Memorial was last inspected in 2022 and was awarded a condition level of 'Good'.

The WMTC have provided a guide which seems to confirm that the PC can take on any work if necessary if the landowner has no objection, a caveat to this does not necessarily make

the PC fully responsible for the WM. Once decided the PC can submit up to date pictures for the WMTC to give consideration to the amount of work likely at which point if agreed quotations can be submitted, which may give grounds for a grant to be given to cover any works needed on the WM.

The Imperial War Museum have been slow to respond to date; however, the next stage will likely mean to discuss this further with the landowner and agree next steps.

*Cllr Janet Nicholls
War Memorial rep, Tockenham Parish Council*

6. Reports from Wiltshire Police

PC Mike Gassner gave the following report:-

From a Police point of view Tockenham did not cause any worries re crime. Mike advised that he and PCSO Kelly Hillier make regular patrols of Tockenham and surrounding small villages, particularly at night. Those attending the meeting found this very reassuring. Mike advised that he has been able to Tack Mark saddles etc and if anyone wanted to take advantage of this free service, to contact him. DK advised Mike that silage works will become an issue with contractors driving too fast through the village, gouging verges and mud on the roads. Route is mainly from Bushton down through the village. Mike will mention this to other officers and will ask them to speak to farms/businesses that use the contractors and ask that the contractor abide by the speed limits.

*PC Mike Gassner
Wiltshire Police*

7. Reports from Local Organisations

The Church was not represented at the meeting however the following report was provided and read out by Cllr Diana Kirby:-

Church Report April 19th 2026

The Benefice has been in vacancy since February 2025. The main areas of focus have, therefore, been maintaining regular worship and responding to life events requests, developing a Profile to advertise for a new incumbent and maintaining a pastoral presence throughout the village.

Services and Worship

Throughout the vacancy so far the Benefice has been fortunate to have two ordained clergy: Richard Holness, our Curate, and Jonathan Beach, Chaplain of St Mary's, Calne who has volunteered to help us. Along with two Lay Worship leaders and a Licenced Lay Minister we have been able to develop a service pattern around the Benefice where each Parish has one Communion Service a month and Tockenham has an additional Morning Prayer. Worship leaders meet every three months to organise the dates and who will lead each service. The

Benefice Administrator has a list of retired Clergy who are willing to help, if required, and will find replacements if necessary as well as clergy for life events. In Tockenham the consistent pattern has been appreciated, and services have been regularly well attended with a stable and slightly growing worshipping community averaging around 15 in number. Special services attract much larger numbers.

Life Events

For the calendar year 2025 there was: 1 Funeral, 0 Burial of Ashes, 1 Wedding and 1 Baptism.

Profile and Recruiting

Each parish in the Benefice spent time consulting with their communities to find out what hopes and dreams parishioners had for a new incumbent and how they would like the church to move forward in the future. In Tockenham we held a Visioning Event on 9th May 2025 at the Village Hall at which groups worked together to explore their aspirations for the church by creating a symbolic model using recycled materials.

A Profile committee was set up with someone from each Parish and a Profile was developed incorporating a compilation of ideas from around the Benefice. It was encouraging to find that ideas were generally in alignment, and it was exciting to build and finalise the Profile for the September deadline. Following advertising in October one person applied for the position and was shortlisted. They had an introduction to the Benefice on 13th January 2026 and was interviewed on 14th January 2026. Unfortunately, the Interview Panel, which consisted of a person from each Parish along with the Arch Deacon and Rural Dean decided that the candidate was not a good fit for the position.

The position was readvertised in March and again one candidate has applied. Unfortunately due to personal family circumstances this applicant withdrew.

Pastoral

Members of the church community are proactive in supporting those in need within the village and sit on all the secular village committees. A small prayer group regularly prays for the community and church.

Building

The churchyard has been maintained monthly during growing months by a contractor, which we have been pleased with and occasional working parties of volunteers. Work to the bell cote has kept the crows out. The porch roof has started to leak and will be repaired shortly. A new Bluetooth has been installed for the sound system, which has been an improvement.

Kris Dickens gave the following report on the Village Hall:-

A summary of the events held in the Village Hall was provided and Kris confirmed that wi-fi has been installed at the Village Hall.

Kris gave thanks to the Village Hall Committee and the bar staff for all their work throughout the year.

Kris Dickens
Chair, Tockenham Village Hall Committee

Kevin Woolnough gave the following report on the Village Fair:-

Annual Report Tockenham Village Fair 2025

The weather stayed dry and pleasant. Anthony Drury opened the Fair and welcomed the Village, helpers, entertainers and families who year after year return to support us.

The Fair Committee numbering seventeen would like to thank all those who contributed to making this such a successful event.

The Fair's Committee chose Prospect Hospice as it's Charity to support from 2025 to 2027.

From the Net distribution profit £8,697.84 the Committee were able to distribute the following monies:

Parish Council to hold for Defibrillator expenses – £300

Prospect Hospice – £500

This totalled £800

The remaining £7,897.84 was divided between the PCC and Village Hall.

The PCC receiving £3,948.92 and the Village Hall receiving £3,948.92.

The Fair Committee have reformed and have been meeting regularly since January planning for this year's Fair. The Committee members remain the same as last year with one new

Kevin Woolnough
Chair, Tockenham Village Fair

8. Report from Wiltshire Council Representative

Wiltshire Councillor Allison Bucknell gave the following report:-

Annual Report

This is the time of year for Annual Meetings, with Parish Councils holding their Annual Parish Council Meetings and hosting Annual Parish Meetings. These meetings provide an important opportunity for Parish Councils and local community groups to report back on the year just passed and to look ahead to the year to come. As your Wiltshire Councillor, I attend these meetings whenever possible and give an annual report, and I hope to see many of you there.

Following the elections in May 2025, Wiltshire Council moved to a position of "No Overall Control" (i.e. no single party has enough seats to form a single party administration). A new

administration was narrowly voted in, and the Council is now run by the Liberal Democrat Group with support from Independents and occasionally from Labour.

It has been an interesting and, at times, challenging year at Wiltshire Council. The administration brought forward its budget for 2026/27 alongside a three-year financial forecast. My Conservative colleagues and I had serious concerns about several elements of the proposed budget and its long-term impact on Wiltshire taxpayers. These concerns included:

- plans for three-weekly bin collection
- the rebuild of St Stephens Car Park in Trowbridge (which although it seems a long way away, our money would be used for the project)
- significant increases in parking charges
- ceasing funding for Community Transport (including the Link schemes)
- £20 million of new borrowing, contributing to more than £76 million in long-term costs

In addition, the Cabinet voted to close both Household Recycling Centre (HRC)s in the north of the County (Purton and Lower Compton).

Fortunately, there has been a series of U-turns by the administration so the HRCs have a stay of execution whilst an alternative site is sought, and it appears that the decision to cut funding for community transport was a mistake, so money has been found to keep it going.

My colleagues and I are busy pointing out the flaws in the various proposals put forward by the budget and we continue to do our best to fight for common sense to prevail.

I remain concerned that the budget that was approved will lead to service reductions, harm to the local economy and residents paying the price for decades to come.

Concerns about highways, road conditions and potholes continue to fill my inbox and are raised regularly at Parish Council meetings. As always, please report issues via the MyWilts app. If problems persist, please escalate them through your Parish Clerk and contact me directly — I am always happy to follow up with highways engineers on your behalf.

We are seeing a reasonable amount of work taking place locally on highways, and I am pleased to see that some works are taking place to repair the back roads which took a beating when Lyneham Banks was closed, along with other regular resurfacing schemes, such as Winterbourne Bassett. We are also awaiting the finalisation of a series of Traffic Regulation Orders to formalise reduced speed limits in several part of my division, particularly through Bradenstoke and Tockenham.

I have started a process to bring in a “Trusted Billposters Scheme” to enable events such as Tockenham Fair to advertise locally on the Highways. A compromise has been offered which I don’t believe works, so I struggle on.

Wiltshire's Local Plan has effectively stalled. Government Inspectors were not satisfied with the draft plan that was submitted and have indicated that it will need to be fundamentally reworked. This follows nationally imposed changes that have increased Wiltshire's housing requirement by 81%, creating significant uncertainty for communities across the county. The consequence is a heightened risk of speculative planning applications, as the Council now faces restarting an extremely complex, time-consuming and costly plan-making process that is likely to take several years. This task is made even more challenging by the withdrawal of funding to support neighbourhood plans.

Lyneham, in particular, is feeling the cumulative impact of large-scale development, with several substantial schemes already underway and further applications still awaiting determination. I have always supported organic growth that meets the genuine needs of local communities. However, development on this scale risks overwhelming an area and makes successful integration far more difficult. It is to be hoped that new residents will come to value their community and, in time, become the volunteers and parish councillors of the future who help to sustain it.

This situation also places Wiltshire Council in an increasingly difficult position when determining planning applications. I understand that the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document, which had been identifying both permanent and transit sites, is now expected to be considered as part of the revised Local Plan. In the meantime, the absence of an up-to-date plan leaves the Council with limited grounds to resist speculative proposals, creating what can feel like an open season for developers.

Nationally, despite strong Government rhetoric on boosting housing delivery, housebuilding rates have slowed, while pressures on rural areas from housing and solar farm proposals continue to grow. Whether all currently permitted developments will ultimately be built out remains to be seen.

It's not all gloom and doom however. I am delighted that at long last we have welcomed Tockenham to be a full member of the Bradenstoke Solar Farm Community Grant Fund, the benefits of which have already been proven.

And the Wiltshire Connect Demand Responsive Travel service is proving to be a lifeline for the rural communities.

I will continue to keep you updated over the coming months on all these important issues. Thank you to all our Parish Councils and the many community groups who work tirelessly to keep villages across Lyneham Division vibrant, resilient and wonderful places to live.

Allison Bucknell

Wiltshire Councillor for Lyneham Division

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9. Public Questions and General Discussion of Parish issues

Janet Newman asked if there was a map available showing the Rights of Way. Cllr Kevin Woolnough advised he would provide her with a copy.

Kris Dickens thought it would be nice to have some planted pots either side of the War Memorial. Cllr Julie Marshall agrees that this is something she would be happy to maintain if the Parish Council are able to provide funds for the pots and flowers. Item to be included on the next Parish Council agenda.

A question was asked about war graves in the cemetery; a visitor from Bournemouth, with a special interest in war graves had only been able to find one grave but thought there should be more. Cllr Diana Kirby will ask Mandy Cook where the graves are located within the cemetery.

Cllr Diana Kirby will forward updated Community Care Group leaflets and updated information when available.

Cllr Diana Kirby advised the Parish magazine donation continues to be made annually, litter picks happened twice a year and the Christmas tree light up event continues to be a popular event.

Date of next meeting 20th May 2026, Annual Parish Council Meeting followed by Parish Council meeting.

Meeting closed: 8:25pm