



# **Cookham Parish Council**

## **Annual Report 2024-25**



## Foreword

### Chairmans Report

Welcome to Cookham Parish Council's Annual Report. It has been an interesting year.

Particularly sad news was the sudden death on 31 March 2025 of Cllr. Eileen Bune. Eileen was a hard-working, much respected and loved councillor, who had represented Cookham Rise since 2015. She will be sadly missed.

Our then Clerk gave notice in June and left in August 2024. We retained a Locum Clerk, Hilda Holder, with Jonathan Holder as a consultant. Our new clerk, Deepa Kanthi, started in November. We are grateful to all of them, and Christine Hunter our Assistant Clerk, for all their help during this difficult period. We have taken advantage of Hilda's and Jonathan's expertise and Deepa's commercial background significantly to modernise and streamline the Council's practices and procedures. We hope that this will be an ongoing process.

We have created a new website for the Council, with a new address: [www.cookham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.cookham-pc.gov.uk). The new website is brighter, easier to use and more comprehensive than the old, as well as easier for us to keep up to date. The Parish Office's and Councillors' e-mail addresses have changed accordingly. (Emails to the old addresses are of course forwarded to the new ones.)

As last year, one of the Council's major preoccupations this year has been the three planning applications for housing at Lower Mount Farm and Strande Park. These applications were not debated by RBWM's relevant committee until 19 December 2024. We made sure that Cookham's interests were advanced as fully and forcefully as possible. We retained planning and traffic specialists to help us and made a number of submissions.

We were deeply unhappy with the RBWM Planning Committee's discussions on 19 December and their decisions to allow all the applications. We succeeded in obtaining only minor changes and in our view the resulting developments (which will add some 10% to Cookham's housing stock) are far from ideal. We considered a legal challenge but the advice from our KC did not justify proceeding.

We shall continue our efforts to protect the special nature of Cookham. We are already deeply engaged in opposing a proposed crematorium in the important green belt off Long Lane.

As part of our efforts I am pleased to say that after a final consultation by the Parish, the draft Neighbourhood Plan has been approved by the Parish Council and sent to RBWM for its consultation and Examination. We hope for a referendum and approval in the summer of 2025.

Sadly, the progress Mark reported last year in our negotiations with the Environment Agency to restore access to Lock Island at Odney Common proved illusory. We shall continue our efforts.

The Byelaws governing the Moor and Odney Common have now been posted on each (on Odney Common in a new notice board). We have appointed an Officer to enforce them, liaising with the National Trust and Odney Estates. The Officer will also enforce our Rules in the Alfred Major Recreation Area where we have experienced some graffiti, minor vandalism and abusive behaviour.

As usual, we participated, with a stall and the presence of many Councillors, in the Scouts' Cookham Fair on Cookham Moor in June. We took part similarly in the Christmas Fayre in the High Street.

In October, I was pleased to host on the Council's behalf a reception in the Community Room in High Road to welcome the Maire of St. Benoit with their and our own Twinning associations.

Throughout the year it has been a pleasure to work with such good colleagues on the Council. Thank you to all of them for their good humour, patience, hard work and dedication to serving the people and Parish of Cookham. Thank you also to all those organisations, such as but not limited to the Cookham Society and WildCookham, as well as all the individuals who have worked with the Council during the year for the same purpose.

**Bill Perry**  
**Chairman, Cookham Parish Council**



Cllr Bill Perry  
(Chairman)  
Cookham Ward



Cllr Mark Howard  
Vice Chairman  
West Ward (Dean)



Cllr Carol Aisladie  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Lesley Austin  
Cookham Rise Ward



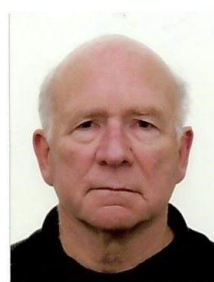
Cllr Nick Bedwell  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Mandy Brar  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Eileen Bune  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Tony Caen  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Jamie Moore  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Laura Tull  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Mary-Lou Kellaway  
West Ward  
(Cookham Dean)



Cllr Richard Kellaway  
West Ward  
(Cookham Dean)



Cllr Harriet Pleming  
West Ward  
(Cookham Dean)



Cllr Jacqui Edwards  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Anna-Louise Regan  
Cookham Ward



## **Committee Reports**

### **Finance Committee**

The members are: Cllrs. R. Kellaway (Chairman), Brar, Caen, Edwards, Howard, Moore, Pleming and Regan

The Finance Committee is responsible for the setting of budgets, and it also oversees the finances and governance of the Parish Council including:

- Completing the annual budget, taking full account of the needs and requests of the General Purposes, Planning, Flood and Staffing Committees.
- Recommending a precept for approval by the full Parish Council to be collected from residents through RBWM.
- Overseeing the completion of the annual return and audit.
- Periodically reviewing the Parish Council's policies on such diverse matters as data protection, complaints and financial controls.

The budget for this year planned a small deficit of just under £12,000. There are ample reserves and we are advised to reduce them over time. There have been extra costs incurred to cover the resignation of the clerk and the need for temporary cover. Two experienced ex-clerks have assisted. Planning issues have required use of consultants and legal support. Revenue from extra burials has balanced out these extra costs so that the final accounts will be largely in line with the budget. The precept for the new year is an increase of 5% which forecasts a small deficit of £12,000 which is covered by reserves.

**Cllr Richard Kellaway**  
**Chairman, Finance Committee**

## **Staffing Committee**

### **An introduction of our Parish Office Staff;**

An introduction of our Parish Office Staff:

After a busy recruitment period to fill the vacancy of Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer, following our previous Clerks resignation, I am delighted to introduce Deepa Kanthi to this role.

Deepa joined Cookham Parish Council in November 2024, with a wealth of transferable experience gained within the Banking sector. Deepa joins Christine Hunter, Assistant Clerk and together they work with and support Cookham Parish Council in achieving its aims and objectives. They both have extensive liaison with the team of Councillors, Contractors and the public.



Their busy days include tasks such as keeping Council legally compliant and on track, being the main contact for residents, ( in person, written and phone calls ), contractors and visitors, creating agendas and taking minutes, updating the Cookham Parish Council website, monitoring planning applications, administration of allotments and burials at Cookham Cemetery, press releases, liaison with 3rd parties for contracts, issuance and authorisation of invoices, balancing the Councils accounts and anything else that falls into that huge bucket of general office administration, the list is endless .

Contact details for Deepa and Christine can be found at the end of this report.

Which leaves me to finish with thanking both Deepa and Christine on behalf of the Staffing Committee, for all the work they do.

**Cllr Carol Aisladie**  
**Chair, Staffing Committee**

## **CPC Planning Committee**

### **Report for Year May 2024 – April 2025**

Cookham Parish Council's Planning Committee has influence rather than power. We don't decide the result of planning applications- that is the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's (RBWM's) job. However, we do provide key local input, informed by our extensive collective knowledge of Cookham and its community, into the RBWM's and others' planning processes.



**View from Long Lane, Cookham, across the Green Belt to Maidenhead**

This year has been a very busy year for us:

- Consultations - We responded to consultations on the new Government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); the RBWM's proposed new Parking Policy and Biodiversity Action Plan; and consultations on the Southeast Transport Strategy, the River Thames Scheme, and the new Maidenhead Local Plan.
- RBWM – We have been working with our RBWM councillors Mandy Brar and Mark Howard to ensure that that Cookham's voice in planning matters is heard fairly in the RBWM.
- Community – We have liaised with the Cookham Society, Wild Cookham, and Friends of Cookham Abbey, amongst others, to improve the effectiveness of our Planning inputs. We've also liaised with the Maidenhead Advertiser to get our points across to a wider local audience.
- Major Planning Applications
  - Cannondown Road/Strande Park – We spoke to the Maidenhead Development Management Committee to oppose the final plans for the Cannondown Road and Strande Park housing developments, because of issues with increased sewage spills, lack of accessible open space, increased traffic congestion, especially around Cookham Bridge, dangerous parking, and poor provision of public transport. To our disappointment, the plans were passed. However, we did win concessions on upgrades to Cookham's sewage system and bus service, and traffic monitoring. We are keeping up the pressure on the RBWM to try to ensure that Thames Water implement the conditions won on sewage system upgrades effectively.

- Proposed Crematorium – We continue to oppose this completely inappropriate proposed development in part of the narrow area of Green Belt between Cookham and Maidenhead, off Long Lane, a mainly single track, rural road.
- Marlow Film Studios and Holland Farm Applications – We spoke at the Public Inquiry to support Bucks County Council's decision to reject the application for Marlow Film studios. We drew the Planning Inspector's attention to the inadequate modelling of increased congestion on Cookham Bridge, and potential effect of increased sewage discharges from Little Marlow Sewage works on Thames pollution in Cookham. We also objected to the application for 400+ dwellings at Holland Farm in Bourne End, for the same reasons.
- Smaller planning applications – We have considered and responded as appropriate with informed local feedback to an average of 10-15 Cookham planning applications per month. We have also supported groups of local residents, where appropriate, in requests for support for planning objections and enforcements.

The new Government's recent changes to the NPPF increase the requirements for Local Authorities to build even more houses in already overcrowded areas and weaken planning rules protecting the Green Belt. Following these changes, unfortunately, we expect an even busier year next year.

Key issues of concern are the implementation of the sewage system upgrade conditions on the Cannondown Road and Strande Park developments, the proposed Crematorium off Long Lane, and the Church Commissioners' declared intention to build 200 dwellings on Cemetery Field south of Cookham Rise, effectively joining Cookham to Maidenhead. The RBWM will also be starting to develop a new Borough Local Plan at the beginning of 2026, which potentially means more large developments for Cookham.

We look forward to the new Cookham Neighbourhood Plan, which will provide updated planning guidance specific to Cookham, hopefully being approved within the next year. There will be lots of work to do in the coming year, with available resource, including Parish Councillor time, also a concern for this committee.

We would like to thank Christine Hunter and Deepa Kanthi, our Clerks, and all our planning Councillors for all their support in the last year. Eileen Bune, with her common sense and long knowledge of Cookham's community, will be sadly missed. Many thanks to the members of the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan Working Party who have worked so hard to develop our Neighbour Plan. Many thanks also to Bill Perry, who stepped down last year as Chair of the Cookham Parish Council Planning Committee, Dick Scarff, who represents the Cookham Society on our committee. Jon Herbert, our planning consultant, and Simon Watts, independent traffic consultant, have provided invaluable expertise and help. We'd also like to thank all the Cookham residents, including Paul Strzelecki, who have shared their suggestions and concerns with us.

**Jacqui Edwards, Chair, CPC Planning Committee**



## GENERAL PURPOSES ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

All the trees in the Alfred Major Recreation Ground were surveyed and the necessary work undertaken to make them safe. This included removing boughs that were over hanging in neighbours' gardens.

An infestation of Oak Processionary Moth was found on these majestic oak trees and had to be dealt with as an emergency, as they can harm dogs and people with their mildly poisonous spines. Leaflets were hand delivered by a Councillor to all the homes that were affected and within days a tree surgeon was employed to remove all the caterpillar nests.



## REFURBISHMENT OF ALL PARISH COUNCIL NOTICE BOARDS

It was difficult to read all the Parish Council notice boards due to cloudy Perspex and the name banners at the top were ripped. Rather than buying new ones, we gave them a successful make over.



## NEW PARISH COUNCIL NOTICE BOARD AT ODNEY COMMON

We invested in a new noticeboard for Odney Common. This one is particularly important as it displays the byelaws. This allows any contraventions to be acted upon. This, and the new “not allowed” signs that we put up on the entrance to the Common were desperately needed as the summer of 2024 was particularly difficult with visitors leaving behind bbq rubbish and human faeces. This is unfair on other visitors and the local blacksmith who was unable to

exercise his Commoner rights and use the grass for hay making. We plan to add a map to the notice board, showing visitors the closest public toilet, which is just around the corner.



## CORONATION COMMUNITY ORCHARD PLANTED AT SUTTON ROAD ALLOTMENTS

A grant was successfully obtained to pay for 32 fruit trees to be planted in the Sutton Road Allotment field. This is a community orchard and will be open for at least one day a year for the public to enjoy. In addition, it is planned to pick fruit for local groups, such as the Elizabeth House care centre for the elderly.

A new tap was installed to water the trees and a hose and water chlorine remover were kindly donated by a Councillor. Essential for the health of young fruit trees.





## NEW SECURITY FENCE AND GATES AT THE ALFRED MAJOR AND SUTTON ROAD ALLOTMENTS

The allotments at Sutton Road reported produce being stolen from their plots. We installed a spikey fence which is very difficult to climb over. We hope to plant a Quick thorn hedge alongside this fence in November 2025, with the help of allotment holders. The allotments at the Alfred Major Recreation Ground requested that we reinstate a gate that was removed without consultation. This was done as it makes delivery of compost etc much easier. This gate also had a protective security fence added to it, as they often get teenagers climbing into the allotment and making a mess.



## WAR MEMORIAL CLEANED

The Cookham Village War Memorial and Tarry Stone seat were professionally cleaned. The Memorial was finished in time for the 2024 Day of Remembrance Day Service.



## NEW BASKETBALL COURT SIGN AT THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATIONAL GROUND

The basketball court at the Alfred Major Recreation Ground is made of tarmac and meets safety standards. Following an inspection by the Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents and under their recommendation we had a new sign put up at the side of the court to warn people of possible dangers.





## HEDGES ALLOWED TO GROW FOR IMPROVED HEALTH AND WILDLIFE

It was decided to allow the hedges around all the allotments to grow longer. This is to improve biodiversity and the health of the hedges.



## IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PONY FIELD AT ALLEYN'S LANE ALLOTMENTS

It was decided to invest in the pony grazing field at Alleen's Lane Allotments. A water trough for the ponies was moved, a tap installed, and the rotten fencing has begun to be replaced.





## NEW CARPET AT CEMETERY LODGE PARISH RENTAL

The house owned by the Parish Council is rented out to staff from the Bell & Dragon. It very much needed new carpets which were installed this year.

## NEW HEDGE PLANTED AT ALLEYN'S LANE PONY FIELD

A grant from the Woodland Trust gave the Parish Council 240 saplings to plant alongside fencing at the pony field in Alleyn's Lane Allotments. Volunteers from Wild Cookham helped to plant the hedge which is a mix of native hedges good for wildlife. It was layered with hessian, mulch and wool to keep the water in the ground and make it drought resistant. The local blacksmith, David Matthews kindly donated straw mulch.



## REPLACEMENT PICNIC BENCH AT THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATIONAL GROUND

Complaints were received of small children bumping and cutting their foreheads on an old metal picnic bench. We replaced it with a safer bench, made of recycled plastic.



**Harriet Pleming, Chair, CPC General Purposes Committee**



## KEEP COOKHAM TIDY PROJECT



Keep Cookham Tidy ( KCT ), was originally set up by a previous Councillor, Christine Doyle, to bring residents together who wanted to combat the problem of litter throughout the village. Chris is still a passionate supporter and regular participant of the litter picks.

All Cookham residents are welcome to get involved, with 199 members, all of whom either live or work in Cookham, includes many children and is now in its 9th year.

Throughout the year there are scheduled group picks situated around the village as well as individual KCT members conducting litter picks on their own/with family. They can often be seen around Cookham helping keep our streets litter free.

Remember it's up to everyone to help keep our beautiful village free of litter.

**Cllr. Carol Aisladie, Lead on Keep Cookham Tidy**

## The Parish Council and its Staff

### Councillors (sub-committees)

#### Cookham Village Ward:

Cllr Bill Perry (Chairman) (PC, GPC, FinC, SC, EWP, NPWP)  
Cllr Anna-Louise Regan (GPC, FinC, FMIC)

#### Cookham Rise Ward:

Cllr Carol Aisladie (PC, GPC, SC, EWP)  
Cllr Lesley Austin (PC, GPC, SC)  
Cllr Nick Bedwell (PC)  
Cllr Mandy Brar (GPC, FinC)  
Cllr Tony Caen (PC, FinC)  
Cllr Jacqui Edwards (PC, GPC, EWP, NPWP)  
Cllr Jamie Moore (PC, FinC, NPWP)  
Cllr Laura Tull (GPC, NPWP)

#### Cookham Dean Ward:

Cllr Mark Howard (GPC, FinC, SC, EWP, NPWP)  
Cllr Mary-Lou Kellaway (GPC)  
Cllr Richard Kellaway (PC, FinC, SC, EWP)  
Cllr Harriet Fleming (PC, GPC, FinC, EWP)

Key for Parish Council sub-committees: (PC)-Planning Committee; (GPC)-General Purposes Committee; (FinC)-Finance Committee; (FMIC)-Flood and Major Incident Committee; (SC)-Staffing Committee, (EWP)-Emergency Working Party Committee and Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (NPWP).

Contact details for all Councillors can be found at [www.cookham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.cookham-pc.gov.uk).

### Representatives on outside bodies

Councillors are appointed annually to various local groups and panels. Appointments for 2024 - 25 were:

Cookham Welfare Trust	Cllrs Brar, Tull
BALC/DALC Executive Committee	Cllrs Austin, Edwards
Pinder Hall Management Committee	Cllr Bedwell
Patient Participation Group	Cllr Perry
Marsh Meadow Management Committee	Cllrs Aisladie, Regan
Marlow and Maidenhead Passenger Association	Cllrs Tull
Borough/Parishes Flood Liaison Group	Cllr Brar, Regan
Maidenhead Waterways Liaison Group	Cllr Perry, Regan
Twinning Committee	Cllrs Brar, M-L Kellaway
National Trust Liaison Group	Cllrs Aisladie, Austin
RBMW Local Access Forum	Cllr Tull
Allotment Association	Cllrs Edwards, Fleming
Friends of Battlemead Common Group	Cllrs Aisladie, B. Perry
Water Safety Groups	Cllrs Brar, Howard

### Employees

Deepa Kanthi, Proper Officer, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer  
Christine Hunter, Assistant Clerk



**Contact the Council at:**

Council Office, High Road, Cookham SL6 9JF

Opening Hours: 8.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday and also Tues 5 to 7pm

Telephone: 01628 522003

Email: [office@cookham-pc.gov.uk](mailto:office@cookham-pc.gov.uk)



Cookham Parish Council  
June 2025

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