



# Cookham Parish Council

## Annual Report 2025-26



## Foreword

### Chairmans Report

As last year, I would like to start by saying a very warm 'thank you' to all my fellow-Councillors, who have worked so well and hard together for the Parish in what has been a productive year, as well as for having re-elected me as Chairman. I would also like to thank Deepa Kanthi, our Clerk, who has settled in very well since her appointment in 2024. She has made a real difference to the Council. Thanks also all the work of Christine Hunter, our Assistant Clerk.

Probably our major achievement this year was the adoption of the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan. After sadly having to excise on the Examiner's instructions some of what we thought were the most important parts, we nevertheless concluded that the Plan was still a 'Good Thing' so it went to a referendum on 17 July 2025. It was approved by 93% of voters. The Local Planning Authority, the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead ('RBWM') then formally 'made' it on 9 September 2025.

Many thanks are due to the Working Party's valiant group of Councillors (in 2025/6: Mark Howard, Jacqui Edwards, Jamie Moore and Laura Tull, with me as Chairman) and volunteers: Dick Scarff (Cookham Society), Lars Ahlgren (WildCookham), Richard Campin (Cookhams Footprint) and Shez Courtenay-Smith, Many thanks are also due to our professionals: Jon Herbert (Troy Planning + Design) and Nina Milner (Administrator). This was a great team effort, with everyone working together for the benefit of Cookham.

No sooner was that complete than we needed a new Planning Working Party. RBWM is about to revise and renew its Borough Local Plan in the light of new housing targets and new planning law and guidance. Cookham needs its voice heard in that and we may need to revise the Neighbourhood Plan due to the changed circumstances. So we are ready to go again! Thanks this time to Cllrs Mark Howard, Carol Aisladie, Lesley Austin and Jacqui Edwards, along with me as Chairman again, and, I am very pleased to say, Dick, Lars, Richard and Shez with Jon and Nina again.

Sadly, Jamie Moore and then Harriet Fleming both resigned this year for personal reasons. We have been pleased to welcome, by co-option, Caroline Blackall (to fill the vacancy left by the sad death of Eileen Bune) and Christian Franke. At the time of writing, we are still trying to fill Harriet's vacancy.

During the year we abolished the 'Flood and Major Incident Committee' which met rarely. We transferred its responsibilities into the General Purposes Committee and the Council itself.

Our aim is always to try to ensure that people can safely and comfortably use our Parish's lovely facilities. When our appointed officer stood down during the year, we had to re-think how to deal with anti-social behaviour ('ASB') in the Alfred Major Recreation Ground, on Odney Common and the Moor. We feel that a security company may be the right answer, so are in discussions with 4Front Security, a local company based in Marlow. We are being held up by complications over the Moor but hope to move ahead with some arrangements shortly.

Actually we have also been hearing of ASB issues at Winter Hill and Bisham Woods. We are therefore in touch with their owners (the National Trust and the Woodlands Trust respectively), as well as RBWM and the Thames Valley Police, to take steps to deal with this.

Now that development has started on the Cannondown Road housing site (200 homes), we are keeping a careful eye on this to make sure the developer does elementary things like lorry wheel washing and obeys the conditions (like the one requiring no development above slab level until Thames Water have confirmed that their network will cope with surface and foul water drainage).

Last year I said that we were: “deeply engaged in opposing a proposed crematorium in the important green belt off Long Lane”. That proposal was withdrawn in autumn 2025. The respite was temporary. In December a virtually identical proposal was re-submitted. The fight goes on. We hope that the new Neighbourhood Plan, now in force, may help us resist this quite inappropriate proposal.

During the year, we have consulted upon and to universal approval added to (Appendix 8 of) the Neighbourhood Plan a Project to update the (over a century old) chapel and expand the cemetery at Long Lane. We are keen to work with the Church Commissioners, who own the Cemetery Field. We are in discussions with them to acquire enough land for this project, and have design consultants.

In August 2025 we agreed to waive the Bye-laws over Odney Common to permit the Environment Agency to instal a compromise type of safety fence on the south-western wing wall of Odney Weir. They did this in November. We are now pressing them hard to re-open the vital link over the weir from Public Right of Way 53 (across Odney Common) to 65 (along the south-west of Saches Island).

The Chairman’s column in the Parish Magazine, who we thank again for this courtesy, remains an important channel for communication between residents and their Parish Council.

Though everyone has contributed so well, I would like to thank in particular all our Committee Chairs during the year: Jacqui Edwards as Chair of Planning, Harriet Fleming as Chair of General Purposes (I have been Chairman of this Committee since she resigned), Richard Kellaway as Chairman of Finance and Carol Aisladie as Chair of Staffing.

We are all as always grateful to Mandy Brar and Mark Howard who as Borough Councillors (as well as Parish Councillors, which means they really have their fingers on the pulse of the Parish) have represented us so effectively in all manner of ways. It has been a great pleasure for us all that Mandy has been the Mayor of the Royal Borough in 2025/6.

Finally, I would like to thank all the volunteers and voluntary organisations, especially but not limited to the Cookham Society and WildCookham, who have worked with and beside us over the past year. Cookham has lots of civic engagement, which is part of what keeps it such a special place to live.

We head into 2026/7 in good shape, ready to continue actively our work for the people of Cookham.

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



Cllr Bill Perry  
(Chairman)  
Cookham Ward



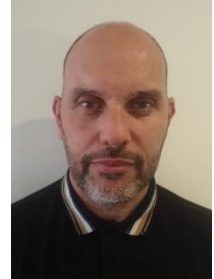
Cllr Mark Howard  
Vice Chairman  
West Ward (Dean)



Cllr Carol Aisladie  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Lesley Austin  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Nick Bedwell  
Cookham Rise Ward



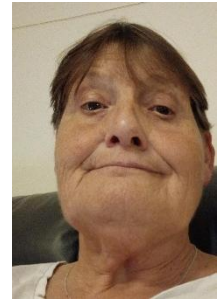
Cllr Mandy Brar  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Tony Caen  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Christian Franks  
Cookham Rise Ward



Cllr Caroline Blackall  
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 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, Franke 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.

At the end of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 our total expenditure was £197000.00. This was below budget due to regular monthly monitoring and tight control. The principal income came from the six-monthly precept of £84098.00 received from the Royal Borough. In addition, we managed three allotments and one cemetery which bring in extra revenue and we rent out the old gravedigger's house at the cemetery.

We have recommended a new precept to RBWM showing an increase of 6.6%. This will cover current inflation of around 4% and extra money to provide improved security for our open spaces and allow for professional help opposing unwelcome planning applications such as crematorium and further incursions into the village green belt.

The new change is equivalent to 32 pence per month for a band D property on last year.

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

## **Staffing Committee**

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

After last years recruitment to complete the administration team, Deepa and Christine have worked together to form a strong relationship this past year.

Still busy with the task of keeping Council legally compliant and all the administration tasks that go along with that, together they have updated procedures, systems and helped identify where new equipment is required. This will ensure that we keep on top of technology for more efficient results and working practices.

A key change this year is the cross training of tasks between the two of them to ensure that in the case of a planned or unplanned absence, work continues to be actioned in a timely manner. This has proved valuable, as unfortunately Deepa has been unable to return back from a holiday due to the war and the restricted flights back to the U.K. At the time of writing this report, we are hoping she will be back this week. She has been greatly missed and will be a relief to all when she is safely home.



Deepa has also fit in time for studying and completed the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) in August . She has now registered to study for the Level 3 qualification that enhances a Clerk's knowledge, confidence and career prospects. This benefits the Council as will enable us to meet the criteria for the General Power of Competence (GPC), which grants greater freedom for action. We all wish her well in what will be a busy year for her completing this qualification.

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

Once again, on behalf of the Staffing Committee, I will finish with thanking both of them for all the work they continue to do.

**CIlr Carol Aisladie**  
**Chair, Staffing Committee**

## CPC Planning Committee

### Report for Year May 2025 – April 2026

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 collective knowledge of Cookham and its community, into the RBWM's and others' planning processes.



**Grange Farm, from High Road, Cookham.**

This year has been very busy for us following the Government's changes last year to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These significantly weakened planning protections for the Green Belt, especially around villages such as Cookham.

- **Strategic Consultations** - We responded to strategic consultations on the Government's further proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and the RBWM's proposed new Parking Supplementary Planning Document.
- **RBWM** – We continued to work with our RBWM councillors Mandy Brar and Mark Howard to make sure Cookham's voice in planning matters is heard fairly in the RBWM and also spoke on key Cookham applications to the RBWM Maidenhead Development Management Committee.
- **Community** – We continued to liaise with the Cookham Society, Wild Cookham and concerned Cookham residents to maximise the effectiveness of our Planning inputs.
- **Major Planning Applications**
  - Proposed Grange Farm Clinic. We are currently responding to this application. We have commissioned an independent traffic expert to advise us on the effects of traffic from the proposed clinic on Grange Road, the already difficult Grange Road/Lower Road junction, and Cookham generally.
  - Proposed Crematorium – This application was withdrawn and then resubmitted this year with only very minor changes. 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.
  - Cemetery Field – We remain deeply concerned at the Church Commissioners' declared intention to build two hundred dwellings on Cemetery Field south of Cookham Rise, effectively joining Cookham to Maidenhead.



**Construction work at the Cannondown Road sites.**

- Cannondown Road / Strande Park developments. We continue to support the Cookham Society in keeping the pressure on Thames Water to upgrade Cookham’s sewage system to cope safely with these new developments. Construction work has started on the Cannondown Road sites. We are concerned that the developer already appears to have taken short-cuts with various planning conditions for these sites. We are working with our local RBWM ward councillors to get these conditions enforced.
- Marlow Film Studios and Hollands Farm. Unfortunately, Marlow Film Studios were given the go-ahead by the Secretary of State, who over-ruled Bucks County Council’s decision to refuse the application. We expect more traffic and Thames sewage pollution in Cookham as a result. The very large (450+ dwellings) Hollands Farm applications in Bourne End have not yet been approved, with recent concerns raised over inadequate road access to the site in Bourne End.
- **Smaller planning applications** – Parish planning councillors considered and responded with informed local feedback to an average of 10-15 Cookham planning applications, and 5-10 tree work applications, per month. We have also supported local residents, where appropriate, in requests for support for planning objections and enforcements.
- **Enforcements** – Unfortunately these have become a persistent concern in Cookham this year. Even with the help of our local RBWM councillors, we are concerned by several cases where the RBWM planning department has failed to enforce planning rules to protect Cookham residents.



<https://cookham-pc.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

Last August, Cookham Residents overwhelmingly voted ‘yes’ to the Cookham Parish Neighbourhood Plan. Our Neighbourhood Plan has since proved very useful in our Parish planning responses, particularly those which seek to preserve the special character of Cookham. However, the huge recent changes the Government has made in planning policy already mean that we need to start updating our Neighbourhood Plan to make sure it remains effective. Arrangements for this are in hand.

The Government is now proposing yet further changes to the NPPF designed to further weaken Green Belt protections, particularly for villages with railway stations such as Cookham. We voiced our very strong concerns to the Government consultation at their proposals to relax Green Belt protections and force high densities (at least 40+ dwellings per hectare; twice the density of the Cannondown Road site) for developments within ‘reasonable walking distance’ of railway stations. This would potentially result in completely inappropriate development for many rural villages with stations, including Cookham.

Key issues of concern for us next year are the further changes that the Government will make to the NPPF, and the increasing flood of speculative applications on Green Belt land around

Cookham which these are likely to further encourage. The RBWM is also starting to develop a new Borough Local Plan, which potentially means more large developments for Cookham. We expect a busy coming year. With Parish Council elections coming up in Spring 2027, we are looking for more active recruits to join our planning committee next year, so we can keep defending Cookham against inappropriate development.

We would like to thank Christine Hunter and Deepa Kanthi, our Clerks, and all our planning Councillors for their hard work in the last year. Many thanks also to Bill Perry, our Parish Chair, and Dick Scarff, who represents the Cookham Society on our committee, for their well-informed contributions. Jon Herbert and Rafa Grosso Macpherson, our planning consultants, and Simon Watts, independent traffic consultant, have provided invaluable expertise and help. We'd also like to thank all the Cookham residents who voted to support our Cookham Parish Neighbourhood Plan last year, and who have shared their suggestions and concerns with us.

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

## GENERAL PURPOSES ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

### GENERAL PURPOSES ANNUAL REPORT 2025/6

The members of the committee this year have been Carol Aisladie, Lesley Austin, Mandy Brar, Jacqui Edwards, Mark Howard, Mary-Lou Kellaway, Bill Perry, Harriet Fleming, Anna-Louise Regan and Laura Tull. Harriet Fleming was elected as Chair but had to resign from the Council during the year. Bill Perry was elected to replace her.

### TREE SAFETY SURVEY

All the trees in the Council's ownership are being surveyed for safety again this year. Some in the Alfred Major Recreation Ground had branches which overhung neighbours' gardens. We have trimmed these.

### CORONATION COMMUNITY ORCHARD AT SUTTON ROAD ALLOTMENTS



This orchard, planted last year, is doing really well, thank to dedicated care not least by Cllr Jacqui Edwards. We are hoping that there may be fruit in 2026!

### MEMORIAL BENCH FOR THE LATE CLLR. EILEEN BUNE AT ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND

Following the sad and unexpected death of Cllr Eileen Bune last year, the Council approved and has installed a new bench on the west side of the Recreation Ground. It bears a plaque reading: "In affectionate memory of Cllr. Eileen Bune, who loved and worked for Cookham, from Cookham Parish Council." There will be a dedication ceremony in the summer.

### NEW BIG BIN BY SKATEBOARD RAMP AT THE ALFRED MAJOR RECREATIONAL GROUND

The Council received some suggestions that a new bin at this location should help to reduce litter. We agreed – and felt that a double size would be best. This was duly bought and installed in autumn 2025.

### SAFETY REPORTS ON EQUIPMENT AT ALFRED MAJOR RECREATION GROUND

HAGS-SMP Ltd designs, manufactures, supplies, installs and services playground equipment to the public and private sectors, the majority of business in the UK being derived either directly or indirectly from Local Government Authorities and Education

Establishments. The Play Inspection Company do what their name suggests. We have one or the other inspect and report on all the equipment at the Alfred Major Recreation Ground every 6 months.

We act at once on all orange (moderate) risk warnings (we hope never to receive a red (high) or purple (very high) warning). Fortunately, this year we had only 3 amber warnings in nearly 200 pages of reports. All were attended to promptly. We also do works we think sensible, on the 'stitch in time' principle, even to matters identified as green (low) risk.

#### HEDGES REPAIRED AND TREES PLANTED AT CEMETERY

The hedge along the Maidenhead Road at the Cemetery needed some gaps filling. We have filled them, so we now have a nice complete hedge again.

We also decided, as an early step in our project to improve the Cemetery, to plant some trees in the new section, which was rather bare. With the help, both financial and physical, of volunteers from ACI Group (who are based at Moor Hall) we have planted a number of new trees there.

#### MAINTENANCE AT CEMETERY LODGE (PARISH RENTAL)

The Parish Council has undertaken some essential maintenance and some significant updating of the electrical installation at this house owned by the Parish Council which is rented out to staff from the Bel & Dragon.

#### NEW POND FOR THE PONY FIELD AT ALLEYN'S LANE ALLOTMENTS

Both to improve the bio-diversity at and to help with drainage of this field, a new pond of about 5m x 3m is being created in the south-west corner of the pony field as this report is being produced. The pond should be made using puddled clay where it is sited, so on a natural basis. This is being created with help from WildCookham and a sponsor, CSL Seqirus.

#### BULB PLANTING

We (Councillors and volunteers) have planted some 400 daffodil bulbs in the Alfred Major Recreation Ground and along verges owned by the Council. We hope that these will add a little more colour and joy to the Parish in the spring.



**Bill Perry**  
**Chair General Purposes,**  
**Cookham Parish Council**

## **KEEP COOKHAM TIDY PROJECT**

Keep Cookham Tidy (KCT), continues to grow with currently over 200 members.

Our aim is to keep the Cookhams free of litter, with our scheduled litter picks. It's also nice to see people out and about picking up litter on a regular basis, we thank them for their efforts.

Our last scheduled pick took place on Saturday 21st March to support the Great British Clean initiative between March 13 - 29th. We tackled the Alfred Major Park and surrounding areas on a beautiful sunny morning. The area wasn't too bad for litter but unfortunately dog mess is still a problem in the park, which we also picked up.

I'm happy to report that we have three Duke of Edinburgh participants helping pick up litter to gain their Bronze award. A big welcome to Jessica Bowley and Sophie Smiley from Bisham and also Max Duggan from Cookham, who are all doing an excellent job.



It all started with KCT for Felicity Kibbler, Year 3, from Cookham who has now received a Blue Peter badge for litter picking. Felicity along with her Mum, Dad and brother Ellis joined KCT 3 years ago and still continue to litter pick on a regular basis. This is something that Felicity enjoys and is enthusiastic about.

To find out more about KCT, do visit our fb page or stop one of us whilst litter picking. We wear personalised Hi Vis vests, easy to spot.

Thank you to all who take part in keeping our beautiful Cookham litter free.

**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, PWP)  
Cllr Anna-Louise Regan (GPC, FinC)

### Cookham Rise Ward:

Cllr Carol Aisladie (PC, GPC, SC, EWP, PWP)  
Cllr Lesley Austin (PC, GPC, SC, PWP)  
Cllr Nick Bedwell (PC)  
Cllr Caroline Blackall (GPC)  
Cllr Mandy Brar (GPC, FinC)  
Cllr Tony Caen (PC, FinC)  
Cllr Jacqui Edwards (PC, GPC, EWP, PWP)  
Cllr Christian Franks (FinC)  
Cllr Laura Tull (GPC)

### Cookham Dean Ward:

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

Key for Parish Council sub-committees: (PC)-Planning Committee; (GPC)-General Purposes Committee; (FinC)-Finance Committee; (SC)-Staffing Committee, (EWP)-Emergency Working Party Committee and Planning Working Party (PWP).

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
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  
April 2026

[www.cookham-pc.gov.uk](http://www.cookham-pc.gov.uk)

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