

PADWORTH NEWSLETTER

August 2026



Padworth Newsletter

Welcome to the August edition of the Padworth Newsletter.

As always, we are grateful to everyone in the community who takes the time to share news, photos, events, and recommendations, your contributions are what make this newsletter such a valuable and enjoyable read. A special thank you to our regular contributors for your continued support and enthusiasm.

We warmly welcome new submissions, so please do send in anything you would like to share by emailing padworthnewsletter@yahoo.com by the 25th of the month for publication on the 1st. The newsletter continues to be available on the Padworth Village Hall website, the Padworth Parish website, and local Facebook pages to ensure it is accessible to all. It can be downloaded and read at your leisure.

If you would prefer to receive a copy directly by email, please contact padworthnewsletter@yahoo.com to be added to the distribution list. This month, we have spotlight on local business – Aldermaston Wharf Canal Boat Hire (ABC Boat Hire), updates about what’s happening in Padworth and the surrounding areas.

We would like to thank John Miller for providing this month's front cover photograph. The combine harvester pictured is part of Foudry Farms, a farming partnership run by Angus Hodge (Old Farm), Peter Miller (Great Park, Mortimer) and Jim Bryce (Butlers Lands, Mortimer). The three farms work closely together, with the combine harvesting crops across 2,000 acres each year.



A beautiful selection of flora and fauna was photographed along the Kennet & Avon Canal near Padworth earlier this month. Despite the recent hot and dry weather, it seems that many of the plants thriving are wildflowers and so-called "weeds" – but they provide a stunning display along the canal banks.

More importantly, these native plants play a vital role in supporting bees and other pollinators, providing a valuable source of nectar during the summer months.

Thank you for sharing these lovely photographs with us.



For the past few years, Terry has been holding a plant sale every Sunday between **1.00pm and 4.45pm** at **Padworth Village Hall**. This year, all money raised will be donated to **Battersea Dogs & Cats Home**, supporting the charity's work with animals in need.

Terry has a wealth of knowledge about plants and is always happy to offer advice, whether you're an experienced gardener or just looking for a few ideas. There is usually a lovely selection of plants available at very reasonable prices, perfect for adding a splash of colour to your garden, borders or patio containers.

If you're passing by on a Sunday afternoon, why not stop and have a browse? You might just find the perfect plant to take home while supporting a great cause.

With the hosepipe ban in place and no rain in the forecast, it's worth making every drop count. Have you considered reusing grey water from baths, showers or washing-up bowls (avoiding water containing harsh chemicals) to water plants, and water early in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation.

If you haven't already, consider installing a water butt so you're ready to collect rainwater when the wetter weather eventually returns. Established lawns are surprisingly resilient and will usually recover once conditions improve.



Spotlight on Local Businesses – Aldermaston Wharf Canal Boat Hire

Aldermaston Wharf Canal Boat Hire is part of ABC Boat Hire, one of the UK's best-known canal boat holiday companies. The site became part of the ABC Leisure Group when it purchased Reading Marine in 2010 and today benefits from more than 30 years of experience in canal holidays across England. While visitors come from far and wide, the wharf remains very much part of the local community and an important feature of Padworth Parish.

The wharf is much more than a holiday boat base. It is also home to a well-stocked chandlery supplying boating essentials, offers boat brokerage services for those buying and selling narrowboats, barges and other small craft, and provides a full range of boatyard services, including repairs, maintenance, servicing and crane hire for surveys and out-of-water works. There is a thriving community of people living aboard boats in the area, making the wharf an important year-round hub that serves far more than just the holiday market.

The Kennet & Avon Canal has been an important part of the area's history, and today the wharf continues that tradition by welcoming visitors from across the country to experience life at a gentler pace. Canal holidays are a perfect way to discover the beauty of the Kennet & Avon Canal and the River Thames at a relaxed pace.

From here, boats can cruise west towards the historic market towns of Newbury and Hungerford, or head east to join the River Thames, offering a completely different perspective on the surrounding countryside.

For many people, canal boating is a surprisingly accessible pastime. Despite narrowboats being up to 70 feet long, anyone aged 18 or over can legally steer one on the UK's canals without needing to pass a boating test. After a short handover from the experienced team, even complete beginners can soon find themselves confidently navigating locks and enjoying the tranquil life on the water.

The boats themselves cater for all kinds of adventures. Holiday narrowboats sleep between two and twelve people, making them ideal for couples, families or groups of friends, while the popular day boat can accommodate up to ten people for a leisurely day exploring the canal. Dogs are welcome too, making it easy for the whole family to enjoy the experience together.

The waterways have seen something of a revival in recent years. While many people are discovering canal holidays as an opportunity to switch off from busy lives, others have embraced life afloat more permanently. Rising housing costs have led to renewed interest in living aboard narrowboats, with many people attracted by the slower pace of life, close-knit canal communities and the opportunity to live closer to nature.

Aldermaston Wharf has even enjoyed a brush with television fame. One of its boats featured in the much-loved series *Great Canal Journeys*, accompanying Gyles Brandreth and Sheila Hancock during filming in London. Although the programme wasn't filmed at the wharf itself, Haley Hadley, Marketing & Sales Director, said: "It's always a source of pride to see one of our boats on national television, helping to showcase the charm of Britain's inland waterways to millions of viewers."

Whether it's walkers pausing to watch boats negotiate the locks, local residents enjoying the canal towpath, members of the local boating community calling in for supplies or maintenance, or visitors setting off on a week-long holiday, Aldermaston Wharf continues to be a place where people slow down, reconnect with nature and discover that some of the best journeys begin right here in the heart of Padworth.

<https://www.abcboathire.com/our-locations/aldermaston-wharf>



Down on the Farm – so much news!

July has been an amazing month. The weather has been record-breaking – hottest and driest – and with it has come so many other problems for most of us.

The wheat harvest started at least two weeks earlier than normal and it looks as though it will finish before you read this, certainly by 26th July. In 1976, we finished on 3rd August, itself a record for us. To say that it has been an eventful time is an understatement! The dry weather has made a huge impact on the yields, quality and moisture of the crop. As I have written many times before, soil type is key: good land yielded well enough (10 tons/ hectare or 4 per acre) but the poorer gravel land has been a disaster at 3-4 tons/hectare. The grains have been small and shrivelled but the protein has been very high due to the amount of sunshine. The straw, which in some areas is an important commodity for livestock, is minimal in quantity and will prove to be in short supply nationally.

The temperature of the grain has been an unusual and difficult problem this time. Simply put, it is coming into the store too hot, which is dangerous and can have far-reaching effects if not handled carefully. Cooling towers that are put into the heaps of grain have little effect if the outside temperature is as high as 30°C plus. To try to counteract the problem we have totally altered the timing of operating the combine-harvester. It is hard to believe but we have been cutting the wheat starting at 2am when the grain is much cooler and carrying on until 1pm. A hug ‘thank you’ to our staff, combine driver and grain carters for their co-operation!



The next major problem to combat is the threat of fire. We experienced this first-hand when a 20 hectare (50 acres) standing crop of wheat caught fire, with a wind fanning the flames. Nothing could be done to extinguish the fire, even with the attendance of many fire brigades. It was all over in a quarter of an hour. We have always had a water bowser and tractor with cultivator attached standing by in the field, but all to no avail!

What is the cause? Usually, the metal on the machines, either the combine or baler, striking stones in the soil and the sparks ignite the tinder-dry stubble or crop instantly. Modern-day tractors all have fire extinguishers fitted, as does the combine, but all too often it is too late before the fire is noticed.

On the livestock front, the forthcoming winter will have its problems with fodder supply. Many farms will be forced into feeding their winter rations of silage, hay and straw early. Hopefully, some rain will arrive in time to give a growth boost to the parched grassland and allow some late grazing, or even late cutting well into October/November. The 1976 dry summer was followed by the wettest September/October in memory!

Friends are asking what we are going to do in August now that the harvest has finished so early. I’m sure we will find something!

Best wishes to you all
From our Agricultural Correspondent

‘PADWORTH PAST’

Bits and pieces about Padworth and its censuses

In 1801 the Act of Union came into effect, combining the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, thus forming the United Kingdom.

The parish of Padworth covers approx. 1200 acres. It is bounded to the north by the road running from Newbury to Reading (A4 westward from London), to the south by a line along Padworth Common/Burnt Common, to the east by Shooter’s Brook stream dividing it from Ufton, and to the west by Padworth Gully which separates it from Aldermaston.

The first official census was taken on 10th March 1801. This was done mainly to ascertain the number of men available to fight in the Napoleonic Wars and the food supply situation. It was simply a head count carried out by the Overseers of the Poor and Clergy. It did not record names - names, ages and occupations of individuals commenced with the 1841 Census.

The 1801 census for Padworth recorded just over 200 people, with about 38 houses inhabited by 45 families. People were employed mainly in agriculture and in trade/manufacturing/handicrafts. There were two working water mills and possibly a third one before this date (according to the Domesday Book of 1086). Records show that one of these mills was a ‘Fulling Mill’ - so named because it was used for the fulling or ‘dressing’ of cloth. The adjacent meadow was known as Rack Mead because racks were erected here to stretch and dry the cloth.

In 1811 the Padworth Enclosure Act was passed. This was to map the parish, extinguish Common Rights (such as grazing) and divide the land into individually owned and fenced fields.

The 1831 census records a population of 234 and indicates that 60% of the working population of Padworth were employed in farming. It was this year that the Padworth Lock on the Kennet & Avon Canal was standardised to ensure a consistent barge-width of between 13-14 feet to allow passage of ‘Kennet’ barges and other commercial, broad-beamed craft. These could carry goods such as coal, stone, grain and timber, rather than purely narrow-boats which enabled life to be lived on the water.

The first Parish Council elections took place in Padworth on Monday 4th March 1895. Many inhabitants were illiterate and the Working Men’s Party produced and distributed cards to potential voters to encourage support.

One of the cottages in Mill Lane was known locally as Inoculation Cottage, as it was here that children were brought for their inoculations against smallpox etc.

Delia Potter

Discovering the World by Rail

There is something uniquely relaxing about travelling by train. Long before airports and motorways transformed the way we travel, railways allowed people to explore countries at a gentler pace, watching the landscape gradually unfold through the carriage window. Even today, there remains a certain romance to rail travel, where the journey itself becomes every bit as memorable as the destination.

Whether reached by train from home or after a flight to another part of the world, some of the world's greatest railway journeys invite us to slow down, settle into our seats and simply enjoy the scenery. Mountains, forests, rivers and villages appear almost like scenes from a film, changing gently as the miles pass by. It is one of the few forms of travel where sitting back with a cup of coffee can feel like part of the adventure.

Among the world's most luxurious rail experiences is India's Maharajas' Express. Inspired by the opulence of India's former royal rulers, the train journeys through vibrant cities, ancient forts and colourful landscapes in remarkable comfort. From the splendour of Jaipur's palaces to the timeless beauty of the Taj Mahal and the spiritual atmosphere of Varanasi, the journey offers not only magnificent scenery but also a fascinating glimpse into India's rich history and culture. It is easy to see why many travellers describe it as one of the finest train journeys in the world.



Switzerland has long been regarded as one of the world's great railway destinations. The famous Glacier Express and Bernina Express weave through some of Europe's most spectacular mountain scenery, crossing remarkable viaducts, climbing through alpine passes and passing flower-filled meadows, sparkling lakes and traditional villages. Travelling through the Swiss Alps during the summer months offers breathtaking views in every direction, making the railway itself one of the country's greatest attractions.

Further north, Norway provides a completely different but equally unforgettable experience. The Bergen Railway and the famous Flåm Railway take travellers across dramatic mountain plateaus before descending into deep fjords lined with waterfalls. The changing scenery is remarkable, from snow-covered peaks to peaceful valleys and tiny villages nestled beside the water. It is easy to understand why many regard it as one of Europe's finest rail journeys.



Closer to home, Scotland continues to capture the imagination of visitors from around the world. The Jacobite Steam Train, made famous by the Harry Potter films, travels through the magnificent West Highlands, crossing the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct before reaching the fishing port of Mallaig. Steam drifting past rugged mountains and shimmering lochs creates an atmosphere that feels almost timeless, reminding us of a slower age of travel.

Across the Atlantic, Canada's Rocky Mountaineer offers an altogether grander scale. Huge glass-domed carriages allow uninterrupted views of the Canadian Rockies, where towering peaks, turquoise lakes, rushing rivers and dense forests stretch as far as the eye can see. Wildlife sightings are common, with bears, elk and bald eagles often appearing unexpectedly along the route. Travelling only during daylight hours ensures that none of this remarkable scenery is missed.

For something rather different, South Africa's famous Blue Train combines spectacular landscapes with classic elegance. Running between Cape Town and Pretoria, the journey passes vineyards, mountains and wide open plains while offering a level of comfort reminiscent of the golden age of rail travel. Combined with nearby safaris or visits to the Cape Winelands, it provides a wonderful way to experience one of the world's most varied countries.

What these journeys all have in common is that they encourage us to slow down. Modern life often seems to value speed above everything else, yet travelling by rail reminds us that there is real pleasure in taking our time. Rather than hurrying towards the next destination, we are invited simply to watch, reflect and enjoy the beauty unfolding around us.

Perhaps that is one of the reasons train journeys remain so popular. They allow us to reconnect with the landscape in a way that faster forms of travel rarely can. The rhythmic sound of the wheels, the ever-changing scenery beyond the window and the anticipation of what lies around the next bend all become part of the experience.

Whether winding through the Swiss Alps, crossing the Scottish Highlands, following Norway's dramatic fjords, climbing through the Canadian Rockies, travelling across the South African countryside or exploring the timeless landscapes of India, these remarkable railways remind us that sometimes the greatest joy is not simply arriving, but appreciating every mile along the way.

Laura Dean, The Travel Design Company

Padworth Village Hall played host to the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) Custom Bike Show on Sunday 28 June, sponsored by Take A Chance. This was the first time the event was held at the village hall, with motorcycle enthusiasts travelling from across the area to admire a fantastic range of bikes. There was something for all the family to enjoy, including refreshments, food, a climbing wall and plenty of opportunities to get up close to the motorbike display. Following the success of the event, Take A Chance looks forward to welcoming MAG back to Padworth next year.



Jumble Sale News and future dates

We are always grateful for your unwanted donations, which can be brought to Padworth Village Hall on the morning of the sale between **9:30am and 11:30am**. All jumble sales are held on the first Saturday of each month. Please note that we cannot accept furniture.

Please do not drop off donations at the hall on any other days. Items left outside these times will be disposed of.

Jumble can also be collected by calling **Hazel Ewart on 07876 073385** to arrange a collection, or you may arrange a time to deliver items by calling the same number.

The sale **starts at 2:00pm**, and there is a **small donation requested on entry, 50 pence**.

July Jumble raised a wonderful £535.31 in aid of Padworth Village Hall

August 1st in aid of The Wessex Cancer Trust

September 6th in aid of St. John the Baptist, Padworth

October 3rd in aid of Padworth Village Hall



WEST BERKS FOOD BANK

See www.westberks.foodbank.org.uk for full details of requests. Collection from Tesco Burghfield, Co-Op Mortimer or 07955 626621. Urgently needed: UHT milk, long life fruit juice, tinned meat, tinned fish, tinned carrots/peas/sweetcorn, egg noodle nests, cereal bars, fruit squash, toothpaste, nappies size 6/7.

WHATEVER. THE. WEATHER

I've given myself a telling off for being so sad when I walk around the garden, there's no more I can do, especially now we have a hosepipe ban. Not that I used the hose much, not enough pressure to make the sprinklers work, it has been watering cans. I am now saying it's not a disaster it's an opportunity. The garden has been developed over the last 50 years and parts were beginning to look past their best, a bit like me. So, I am now researching plants that are drought tolerant and will buy seed and grow some over this winter and next spring. Plants that have died, like Acers, Azaleas and a couple of Rhododendrons will not be replaced by similar but something new, yet to be decided. Not all the plants are suffering, the Day Lilies, Gladiolus, Cosmos and Echinacea are flowering like mad, and the wild Evening Primrose is everywhere.

Walking down by the oak trees you would think it was autumn, the ground is covered in leaves. Trees are clever, when they sense a dry period developing they drop a percentage of their leaves so that the limited moisture can be absorbed by those remaining. Areas that have really suffered are my bog gardens, especially the one with the Darmeras in. Lots of cans of water has not stopped them shrivelling up, they are alive, just got rid of all their leaves. Similarly, the Shuttlecock ferns. It will be interesting to see if they regrow when, if, it rains, or will they wait until next year.

It will definitely be a poor Rhododendron flowering next spring as they need water in June and July to make buds. Mine are showing zero. I failed again with the blue poppies, they were watered daily, grown in the shade, but still shrivelled up. That's it no more.

I am very happy that I have Hollyhocks flowering for the first time. I haven't tried for a few years as previously my attempts had plants but no flowers, now the ones I've grown from seed are flowering.

I am having to sprinkle a lot of repellent powder about as the rabbits are turning to my plants, I don't think they like brown grass. I couldn't believe my eyes last week when I saw a polecat in the garden. Now they are rare. I have told the local nature group.

Let's all do some rain dances and jump for joy when they work.

Groan Time

Studies have shown that farmers can get more milk from their cows by talking to them. It's a case of in one ear and out the udder.

Two hundred years ago two brothers said they could fly, turns out they were Wright.

Doctors say it's healthy going outdoors. It's certainly safer than going out windows.

Do you know what I'd like to say to the man who invented zero, "Thanks for nothing".

Icy is the easiest word to spell, looking at it ICY.

Don't forget to dance.

Mike Warner.



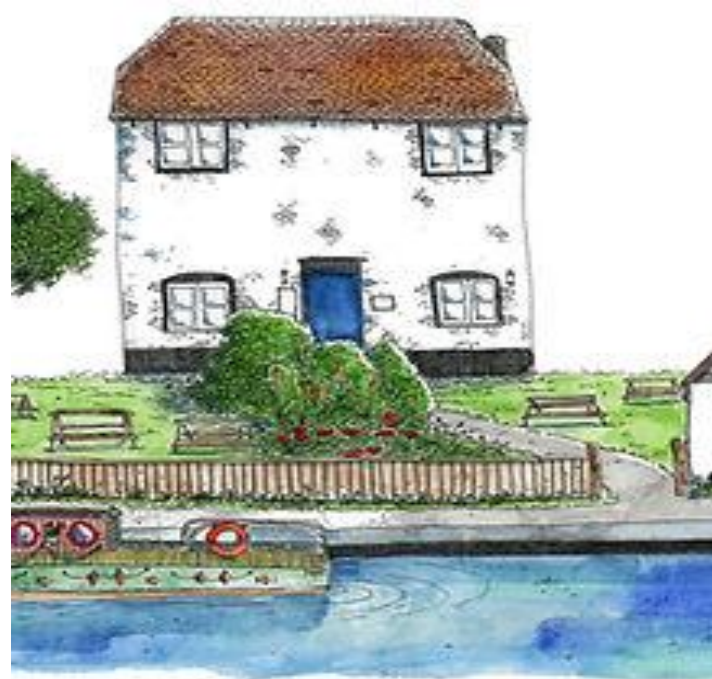
Tree Lily



Hollyhock



Polecat



Tea Rooms Aldermaston Wharf
 Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday
 9.30am – 4pm
 tearoomsaldermaston@gmail.com



ALDERMASTON COFFEE CLUB

1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month any time from
 10.00am – 11.30am
 Join us in the café at Hilliers
 Drop by for a chat, a chance to meet old friends
 and make new ones
 Everyone is welcome – just come along
 For further details contact Cynthia Newman
 cmnewman2021@outlook.com 0118 9713 525



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Competition Schedules are available
 Online, Hilliers, Aldermaston Stores, The Hinds Head, The Butt Inn

ALDERMASTON PLAYERS

DON'T GET YOUR VICARS IN A TWIST

By Ann Gawthorpe and Lesley Bown

Thu 24th, Fri 25th,
 Sat 26th SEPT

Aldermaston
 Parish Hall
 at 7.45 p.m.

TICKETS: £12
boxoffice.aldermastonplayers.co.uk
 0118 971 2530

£1 discount
 before end of August

Bar takes cash & CR cards

This is an amateur production of "Don't Get Your Vicars In A Twist" by arrangement with Stagescripts Ltd

Scouts
 Aldermaston

SQUIRRELS

AT
1st ALDERMASTON SCOUTS

ADVENTURE STARTS HERE!

FOR AGES 4-6

GIVE YOUR CHILD THE CHANCE TO:

- MAKE NEW FRIENDS
- EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS
- GET CREATIVE
- LEARN NEW SKILLS THROUGH FUN ACTIVITIES

JOIN THE NEWEST AND YOUNGEST SECTION OF SCOUTS!
 Squirrels is all about fun, discovery, and building confidence from an early age.

1st ALDERMASTON SCOUTS

Meetings held at Padworth YMCA,
 Wednesdays 5pm-6pm (term time only)

WANT TO JOIN? TO JOIN PLEASE COMPLETE OUR WAITLIST BY SCANNING THE QR CODE

SKILLS FOR LIFE START HERE.

Apply now for up to £1k through Veolia's Sustainability Fund

Veolia, the UK's leading resource management company, has launched this year's Sustainability Fund. The Sustainability Fund provides grants of up to £1,000 to connect people across West Berkshire with their local environment and community. Veolia works in partnership with West Berkshire Council in the treatment of recycling and waste disposal across the county.

The Sustainability Fund has reopened for 2026, following the Fund's biggest year yet in 2025 with six projects being given a total of £6,000 funding across the county. This brings the total number of projects funded, since 2022, to 21 and £21,000 awarded.

Veolia's Sustainability Fund is open to not-for-profit organisations, community groups, or individuals in areas where the company delivers recycling and waste treatment services for the community. Up to £1,000 in funding is available per project and applicants can opt to request in-kind resources or volunteers to help bring your project to life.

Among the projects to receive a grant from the 2025 fund were:

- Mapledurham Lock CIC - who are transforming a dilapidated community space by the river into a vibrant, inclusive, accessible and functional hub for the entire community.
- West Berkshire Green Exchange - who are supporting Carbon Literacy education throughout West Berkshire
- Sustainable Bucklebury - to start up a Repair Cafe in Bucklebury

Funding criteria and how to apply

The Sustainability Fund welcomes applications from a wide range of environmental and social projects. Projects should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Enhances biodiversity
- Promotes sustainable waste behaviours
- Protects the environment by using recycled, reused or reclaimed materials.
- Strengthens and connects local communities, including but not limited to employment support programmes, rehabilitation projects and youth development initiatives

All projects will be assessed on merit, with particular recognition given to those that demonstrate long-term or ongoing community benefits.

Applications can be made via Veolia's website at veolia.co.uk/Sustainability-Fund. The fund will be open for applications until Wednesday 30 September.

Donald Macphail, Chief Operating Officer, Treatment at Veolia, said: *"The Sustainability Fund exists to empower the communities we serve to create real, meaningful impact by connecting people with funding to improve our communities. Since The Fund's inception in 2021, we've supported over 640 projects across the UK with more than £514,000 in funding that has strengthened community and environmental connection. As we head into 2026, I look forward to seeing even more inspiring ideas come forward and the positive change they'll bring to local environments and communities."*

Councillor Stuart Gourley, West Berkshire Council Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways said: *"Veolia's Sustainability Fund is a fantastic opportunity for local groups to bring forward ideas that make a real difference in their communities. From supporting biodiversity to encouraging more sustainable ways of living, these projects help protect and enhance the environment we all rely on. It's great to see funding being made available in this way, supporting local people to take action and create lasting benefits for their communities and the wider district."*



On behalf of
St Saviour, Mortimer West End ~ St Mary and St John, Stratfield Mortimer
St John the Baptist, Padworth

CONFIRMATION 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Pupils,

We warmly invite you to explore the next step along the Christian way by joining the parish's 2026 Confirmation Preparation Programme.

Preparation for Confirmation is a wonderful opportunity for us to come together to learn more about the Christian faith, perhaps to discover gifts, and to grow in the way of Jesus Christ.

The Confirmation Service itself is a very special and joyful service where young and not so young people – we have had candidates in their nineties - affirm for themselves the way of Jesus - the Christian way.

Who is this for?

This invitation is open to all young people in School Year 5 and above who attend our schools and to everyone who has any association with our parishes.

If you were baptized as a baby then, perhaps, this may be an opportunity to reflect on those promises made for you and consider confirming them for yourself. If you have not yet been baptized then the preparation sessions could help you consider your own way toward Baptism, Confirmation and Communion.

Parents and Carers and Grandparents and other Supporters are, of course, also invited to join in exploring next steps and if you would like to discuss this then please do contact me directly. It really is wonderful when family members and friends join together to be Baptised and Confirmed.

What to expect:

We will be running a series of interactive and relaxed sessions designed to explore all sorts of questions about faith, prayer, and living as a Christian in the way of Jesus in today's world.

There will be the opportunity to connect with other people in a supportive environment and to reflect together on life's experiences and also to explore the message of the scriptures and the teaching about the sacraments. And we do, of course, appreciate that people learn and think differently and that there needs to be flexibility in any approach to grouping people together which corresponds to individual requirements. And some people, perhaps with a considerable depth of experience, may think it more helpful to relate on a more individual basis.

PROGRAMME DETAILS:

Where and When: St John's church, Mortimer, starting in September on Sundays at 3.30 - 4.30 pm, which appears to be a good time for most people, but if that's not possible for you then please contact Fr Paul directly.

Duration: The Confirmation programme will consist of 10 preparation sessions.

Expectations: Candidates should begin to involve themselves in the Eucharistic life of the parish, which should include regular attendance at Sunday Eucharist and supporting the parish's community service projects. The preparation will culminate in a beautiful Confirmation service celebrated by the Bishop.

Safeguarding: The whole programme will be overseen by the Benefice's two very experienced Safeguarding Officers.

How to register interest:

If you, your parents or your carers have any questions or would like an informal conversation about what Confirmation means then please do not hesitate to contact me at The Vicarage on 01189331718 or the Benefice Office on 01189333704 or e mail admin@mortimerbenefice.co.uk

We look forward to 'journeying on' together in the way of Jesus Christ.

God bless,
Paul Chaplin
Vicar

Padworth Parish Council Meeting

13 July 2026 Padworth Village Hall

Present

Councillors: Rob Jones (Chair), Andy Williams, Andrew Griffin, Emily Robinson, Tom Tucker, Jonathan Johnson, Jacky Jones

Members of the Public: 2

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from District Councillor Dominic Boeck.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Emily Robinson declared an interest in relation to the Yew Tree Cottage planning application.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, signed and dated.

4. District Councillor's Report

The report will be published on the Parish Council website.

5. Clerk's Report

Members noted payment of the annual PlaySafety inspection invoice and the invoice for the new Parish Council website.

The new website and email system are now live. Members welcomed the website and suggested adding further photographs and updating the newsletter page.

A WhatsApp group has been established for Councillors.

Actions:

- Clerk to arrange payment of the PlaySafety and website invoices.
- Clerk to source additional website images and upload recent newsletters.
- Cllr Williams to add Cllr Tucker to the WhatsApp group.
- Clerk to provide Cllr Tucker with his Parish Council email details.

6. Village Hall Matters

The Village Hall continues to perform well, with high occupancy levels and increasing corporate bookings.

Members noted recent flooding caused by changes to the new borehole water supply. Repairs, including several boiler room leaks, were completed at a cost of approximately £2,000.

Village Hall finances remain healthy, with future investment expected in the kitchen. Members also noted damage to the soffit following a vehicle strike.

An update was received on the ongoing boundary dispute. Discussions have taken place but no agreement has yet been reached.

7. Planning Matters

7.1 Decisions

- 25/02133/FUL – Exolum PSD, Rectory Road. Solar PV array. Approved.
- 25/00933/FUL – Norbrek, Bath Road. Four terraced houses. Approved. Parish Council objected.
- 26/00155/CERTE – Former Aldermaston Quarry. Approved. Parish Council objected.
- 26/00550/PASOL – Padworth Integrated Waste Management Facility. Prior approval not required.

7.2 Awaiting Decisions

- 25/01915/FULMAJ – Padworth Saw Mills. Members noted the continued delay.
- 26/01058/HOUSE & 26/01059/LBC – Yew Tree Cottage. Proposed alterations discussed.
- 26/00783/CERTE – Oakland House, Silver Lane. Retrospective application for use as a children's home discussed.

Actions:

- Clerk to circulate the Yew Tree Cottage and Oakland House applications and submit Parish Council comments via the Planning Portal.

8. Councillor Updates

A4 Bath Road Speed Limit Review Members noted that the evidence gathered was inconclusive and that West Berkshire Council has no further action planned.

Action: District Councillor Boeck to be asked whether any further options are available.

Playground Members discussed providing additional play equipment for children aged 5–10 years. Estimated costs of £12,000–£20,000 were noted.

Action: Cllr Griffin to resend previous correspondence regarding the project.

9. Mill Lane Traveller Site

Two residents attended to raise concerns regarding the recently established Traveller site at Mill Lane.

Members heard concerns relating to increased anti-social behaviour, vehicle movements, road damage, environmental issues and the impact on neighbouring residents. It was noted that the site is within Aldermaston Parish, although Padworth residents are also affected. Residents were advised to continue recording incidents, report concerns to the relevant authorities and engage with Aldermaston Parish Council.

Actions:

- Clerk to provide relevant information to Abi, Clerk to Aldermaston Parish Council.
- Parish Council to write to West Berkshire Council outlining residents' concerns.

10. Next Meeting

7 September 2026

11. Meeting Close, The meeting closed at 8:24 pm.



Padworth Village Hall Volunteers Wanted

If you have spare time and would like to join the Village Hall Committee or have a couple of spare hours each month to help out we would love to hear from you. Please email info@padworthvillagehall.co.uk for more information

Aldermaston Parish Council – Notes of Meeting 14 July 2026

The Medicine Festival at Wasing

The Managing Director came to tell us about this event at Wasing from 12-17 August. This year the festival starts on Wednesday to include a low-key celebration of the partial eclipse. About 9,500 festival goers are expected which is slightly up from the 2024 event, but arrivals will be staggered and changes have been made at the Wasing Lane entrance to get cars off the road quickly, so the impact on local traffic should be minimal. A hotline number will be operational for the duration of the event (#0118 391 3669). Further details including the event's License, Hotline and discounted ticket offer for locals can be found on our Facebook page.

Open Forum

We heard from residents of Aldermaston Wharf who were frustrated at the lack of maintenance of public spaces and traffic noise from the A340. APC will explore the possibility of planting on the verge as an acoustic barrier and report the need for pavements to be cleared of vegetation.

Planning

- AWE: the demolition of buildings near its Red Lane gate. AWE will observe best practice construction guidelines, but we will request that nearby residents be given some way to report any problems to AWE should they arise.
- Barlows Plantation, Silchester Road: a retrospective application for an outdoor site training area. A similar application was refused in 2023 on Emergency Planning grounds. This time the site area is considerably bigger, and the applicant's Emergency Plans lack detail on how trainees and employees would shelter in the event of a radiation incident. We will request clarity and assurance on this issue.

Reading Road traveller's site

Another High Court hearing took place on 8th July. All parties now have until the 24th to submit final written submissions after which the Court will issue a judgement. It is important to note that this judgement will only deal with the interim injunction, including how many people can live on site while the separate planning process plays out. The planning process will ultimately determine whether a permanent residential development will be allowed. A planning application has yet to be validated, so this will take some time.

AWE

We discussed AWE's Future Materials Campus project, its community drop-in sessions and completed its feedback survey. APC is impressed with AWE's openness and willingness to engage with the local community, but also extremely concerned about the impact of the FMC project, especially on our local road network. The construction phase will be 10 years and at its peak there will be around 200 HGVs/buses accessing the Aldermaston site each day, and workers are expected to access the site from 6am to 8pm for a 7am to 7pm working day. To find out more about the FMC and share your views visit the AWE website:

<https://awe.citizenspace.com/fmc/summer2026/>

Next meeting

- Tuesday 11 August – at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall

All Parishioners welcome.

Sophie Crawford

Chairman

For details visit <https://aldermaston-pc.gov.uk/>

ALDERMASTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

As we approach the end of the school year, our pupils continue to embrace a wealth of exciting opportunities. Our talented Year 5 & 6 children performed at The Hexagon as part of the Junior Music Festival, along with many other local primary schools. Others have enjoyed memorable residential experiences, exploring Englefield Estate bringing their learning to life with hands-on experiences and of course Sports Day, which was as competitive as always, despite the heat. These enriching experiences play such an important role in developing confidence, resilience and curiosity – key skills for the future. Our traditional End of Year service was held at St. Mary's Church when we wished our departing Year 6 pupils all the best for their next chapter, together with others who are moving on to new pastures. The KS2 classes presented their production 'Looking for Treasure' which was a great success and much enjoyed by the enthusiastic audiences.

This term in Collective Worship, the theme of Thankfulness has encouraged the children to recognise and appreciate the people, opportunities and world around them. They have explored each of the British values - democracy, mutual respect, tolerance, the rule of law and individual liberty – helping children understand how these values support fairness, respect and positive relationships within the school and our wider community. Children have also been developing the qualities of our Ultimate Learning Hero, drawing on the skills of all five learning heroes to become increasingly independent, reflective, resilient and collaborative learners, both in the classroom and beyond.

Our grateful thanks go to everyone from the school and local community who came along and supported our Summer Fete, brilliantly organised by our dedicated PTA team. As well as having loads of fun with all the stalls and activities, valuable funds were raised which will be used to benefit every pupil in school.

Wishing you an enjoyable summer break from everyone at the school. We will be back in September welcoming our new Foundation Stage children and looking forward to a new term full of exciting learning opportunities.

Cathy Jones

Foundation Governor



Beenham Parish Council – Notes of Meeting Monday - 6 July 2026

Thames Water

Thames Water have fenced off part of the recreation area in Stoneyfield for waste and storage. This was not notified to the PC. The land is leased to the PC from WBC who appear to have been notified but didn't realise it was leased to and managed by the PC. WBC have apologised for the oversight and TW have given assurance that when the work is finished it will be fully restored to its original condition. The PC will formulate questions to TW for their upcoming public Q&A session in the Victory Hall on Thursday 16 July at 4.00pm.

Affordable Housing initiative

There was no update on this.

Grass Cutting & Bin Emptying

The tender document for the grass cutting and bin emptying contract was approved. It is expected that several tenders will be received.

Playground

It was agreed that an assessment of the needs for repairs to the playground area of the Rec would be made against the details of proposed works.

Planning Matters

- 26/00955/FULMAJ. Land opposite Hillfoot, Beenham Hill. Erection of welfare facility and barn for use and management of land as it currently is, ie agricultural. It appears that the purpose is to provide basic storage and family facilities for the renovation work on the existing but overgrown orchard. It was agreed that the PC would submit its concerns over the clarity of potential intended use and that the proposed buildings appear to be too large in scale for the renovation work. It was noted that the site is outside the Settlement Boundary Plan.
- 26/01154/HOUSE. Brynteg, Clay Lane. Replacement shed. **No objection.**
- 26/00710/HOUSE. New Hope, Picklepythe Lane. Erection of greenhouse. **Granted.**
- 26/00953/HOUSE. Corner Cottage, RG7 5NA. Erection of two storey side extension. **Granted.**
- 26/00959/LBC. Awberry Farm. Replacement of 2 Barn windows. **Granted.**

District Councillor

A report was provided on current WBC activities which included advice during the heatwaves, bin collection times, effects on highways and care for dogs. It was noted that the current housing development in Theale consists of 30% of properties being affordable.

Next meeting

- **Monday 3 August** - at 7.00pm in the Community Room.
- All parishioners welcome

Peter Hamblin
Parish Councillor

See the website for full details of the Councillors at [beenhampc.gov.uk/councillors/](https://www.beenhampc.gov.uk/councillors/).

All correspondence to the PC should be addressed to the Parish Clerk, Lauren West:

Tel: 07919 916125 Email: clerk@beenhampc.gov.uk

CR Bookings: Paula Read Tel: 07793116937 Email: info@beenhampreschool.org

Parish Council website: www.beenhampc.gov.uk

Beenham Community Website: <https://www.beenhamonline.org/>

Refugee Support Group officially opens Sanctuary Café in the heart of Reading

More than 70 guests gathered on Wednesday, 29th August evening to celebrate the official opening of Refugee Support Group's new Sanctuary Café, a welcoming community space in the historic RISC building on London Street, Reading.

The café, located within the former RISC World Cafe, brings new life to a much-loved community venue that has been at the heart of Reading for many years. The official opening was marked by Reading's Mayor, Cllr Paul Gittings, who cut the ribbon and served the café's very first cup of coffee.

Guests included sanctuary seekers, supporters, volunteers, community organisations, local partners and funders, all coming together to celebrate a project that combines great food and drink with social impact.

The Sanctuary Café will be open to the public every weekday from 8.00am to 2.00pm, serving freshly prepared meals and speciality coffee made by refugee chefs, cooks and baristas. Every purchase directly supports Refugee Support Group's work helping refugees and people seeking asylum rebuild their lives.

Speaking at the launch, Refugee Support Group CEO Najwa Al Abdallah said: *"This space has been beloved by the community for many years. And now, it will serve a new purpose—one powered by hospitality, hope and dignity. From today, the café will open its doors to the public, serving great coffee and meals made by refugee chefs and cooks. Here, every cup, every plate carries more than flavour—it carries a story of survival, courage and purpose. We will also offer barista apprenticeships, helping sanctuary seekers build real skills and move into employment opportunities. In the afternoons, the café becomes a hub for support—a place where we deliver services that help people rebuild their lives."*

Founded more than 30 years ago, Refugee Support Group supports refugees and people seeking asylum across Berkshire. Alongside legal advice, casework and practical support, the charity helps people integrate into their new communities through education, employment support and wellbeing activities.

The Sanctuary Café is central to that mission. Creating a welcoming space for the wider community, it will provide training opportunities and pathways into employment. Reading's Mayor, Cllr Paul Gittings, who has chosen Refugee Support Group as one of his three Charities of the Year, praised the new venture, saying: *"Now more than ever, it is important that we come together as a community and ensure that Reading is a welcoming place for everyone. The Sanctuary Café is a wonderful example of that commitment."*

You are invited to visit the Sanctuary Café at 35–39 London Street, Reading, where every coffee, meal and conversation helps create opportunities, build connections and support people rebuilding their lives in Berkshire.

- * Refugee Support Group has supported refugees and people seeking asylum across Berkshire for more than 30 years.
- * The Sanctuary Café is located at 35–39 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS.
- * Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8.00am–2.00pm.
- * In the afternoons, the café becomes a base for Refugee Support Group's drop-in and integration services.

Useful Contacts and Numbers

Aldermaston CE Primary School 0118971 3362 enquiries@aldermaston.w-berks.sch.uk

Chair of Governors – Cathy Jones

Aldermaston Parish Councillors

- Sophie Crawford(Ch) 0118 971 2236 scrawford@aldermaston.co.uk
- Dave Shirt 0118971 2549 dshirt@aldermaston.co.uk
- Alison Faulkner 01189714686 afaulkner@aldermaston.co.uk
- Rob Smith 01189710142 rsmith@aldermaston.co.uk
- Ed Tilsley ed.tilsley@gmail.com

- Angela Woodley 01189712803 awoodley@aldermaston.co.uk

Aster Communities

Neighbourhood Officer - Rachael McCarthy 01264405692 rachael.mccarthy@astercommunities.co.uk

ASB Officer – Sue Barton 01264405583 sue.barton@astercommunities.co.uk

Beenham Parish Councillors

- Graham Bowsher (CH) 07557 967 575 g.bowsher@beenham-pc.gov.uk
- Graham Bragg 0118 971 3688 g.bragg@beenham-pc.gov.uk
- Alex Cother a.cother@beenham-pc.gov.uk
- Peter Hamblin p.hamblin@beenham-pc.gov.uk

• Peter McEwen 07717 718 608 p.mcewen@beenham-pc.gov.uk

Benefice Office – Aldermaston 01189 712891 jmanley.awb@gmail.com

Benefice Office – Mortimer 01189 333 704 admin@mortimerbenefice.co.uk

Churchwarden – Padworth - Elizabeth Porter 01189 713136

Environment Agency (24hr) 0800 807060

Ladies at Lunch – Caroline Givan 07808 400843 caroline.givan@gmail.com

Mobile Library 01635519827

Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch Police 101

- Rectory Road – Mike Warner 01189700391

Network Rail 24 hr Helpline 08457 114141

Newsletter padworthnewsletter@yahoo.com

Padworth Common Advisory Committee & Padworth Parochial Charity

- Mike Warner 01189700391

Padworth Parish Councillors

- Robert Jones (Ch) 07475 744182 robert.jones@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Andrew Griffin 07473 803979 andrew.griffin@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Jonathan Johnson jonathan.johnson@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Emily Robinson 07769 674460 emily.robinson@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Tommy Tucker tom.tucker@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Andy Williams andy.williams@padworthparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parish Clerk (Aldermaston) – Abi Lewis

Parish Clerk (Beenham) – Lauren West

Parish Clerk (Padworth) – Ellie Brewer

Reading Buses (No. 3 Bus)

Veolia Environmental Service - Daytime 0203 5672900 west.berks@veolia.co.uk

Padworth Village Hall Bookings – Jacky Jones 07756 820263 info@padworthvillagehall.co.uk

Padworth Village Hall Committee Chair Rob Jones rob.j.jones@btinternet.com

Padworth Parish Website

Padworth Parish Website enquiries

Volunteer Bureau 0118983 1814

West Berks Councillors

- Aldermaston, Padworth & Beenham Dominic.boeck@westberks.gov.uk
- Bradfield Ross.mackinnon1@westberks.gov.uk
- Burghfield & Mortimer Nick.Carter2@westberks.gov.uk
- Burghfield & Mortimer Vicky.Poole1@westberks.gov.uk
- Burghfield & Mortimer geoffrey.mayes1@westberks.gov.uk

West Berkshire Council contact number 01635 551111 customerservices@westberks.gov.uk

Planning Department 01635 519111

Environmental Health 01635 519192

Fly Tipping & Waste 01635 519080

West Berkshire Libraries www.westberks.gov/libraries library@westberks.gov.uk

Burghfield Common Library

0118 983 3632

Opening Hours

Monday 2-5pm
Wednesday 2-5pm
Thursday 10am-5pm
Friday 2.30-6pm
Saturday 10am-12.30pm

Mortimer Library

0118 933 2882

Opening Hours

Monday 1-5pm
Tuesday 9.30am-5pm
Friday 1-6pm
Saturday 10am-12.30pm

Pangbourne Library

0118 984 4117

Opening Hours

Monday 2-5pm
Tuesday 10.30am-6pm
Thursday 9.30am-12pm
Friday 10.30am-5pm
Saturday 10am-12.30pm

Theale Library

0118 930 3207

Opening Hours

Monday 1-5pm
Wednesday 10.30am-5pm
Thursday 2pm-6pm
Friday 10.30am-5pm
Saturday 10am-12.30pm

Thatcham Library

01635 866049

Opening Hours

Monday 9.30am-5pm
Tuesday 9.30am-5pm
Thursday 9.30am-5pm
Friday 9am-5.30pm
Saturday 10am-12.30pm