

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE Parish on Wednesday 13th May 2026, at 7pm, in the Reading Room, 46 Chapel Rd, Weston Colville, Cambridge CB21 5NX. Meeting documents will be able to view on <http://www.westoncolville-pc.gov.uk>

Present: Bridget Durham (Acting Chairman), John Garrod, Rachel Jennings, Matt Russell, Constantine Pagonis, and Jess Ashbridge (Parish Clerk). Two members of the public.

Annual Meeting of the Parish

It was advised with great sadness that Cllr Vidler passed away on Tuesday 28th April. A minute's silence was held.

- 1. Apologies for absence – Cllr Rayner P: Cllr Durham, S: Cllr Pagonis, All in fav.**
- 2. Chairman's Welcome and Annual Report – Cllr Durham read out Cllr Vidler's final report. Appended.**
- 3. District and County Councillors' Annual Report – Appended.**
- 4. Public comments and questions – Representatives from Great Bradley PC came to the meeting to ask what the PC's views were about the Forest City proposal. They commended Weston Colville PC on how the responses to Kingsway Solar had been handled. It was suggested that if more traction occurred another PC alliance could be founded.**

WESTON COLVILLE PARISH COUNCIL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2025/26

I would like to start by thanking all Parish Councillors past and present for their work in delivering the objectives of the council. I have been a member of the Council for nearly 18 years and its chair for the last 14 years. During that time my fellow councillors have delivered some major projects that benefit the village. The first was the trim trail for older children and a major part of the Church End play area. Unfortunately, it is now approaching the stage where significant repairs will be required. The other two major projects are more recent including the provision of the amazing play area on the Green and the major efforts by the flood warden team to ensure the village drainage ditches have been cleared to reduce flooding.

Kingsway Solar Farm

The main occupier of councillor time has been providing response to the various consultations regarding the development of the proposed Solar Farm which would potentially surround the village with solar panels. The council has opposed to this and has made robust replies to the consultations by Kingsway. I would also like to thank all those who helped prepare the response. The Council has also taken an active role in the Parish Council Alliance and will continue to ensure it is involved in and responds to all aspects of the project as it develops.

Flooding in the village

This has been another successful year for flood prevention in the village including updating the flood plan for the whole village and getting the County Council Highways department to complete more actions to alleviate flooding in the village notably the clearing of the Stour behind the old council houses and around the Horseshoe Lane ford. Both the Reading Room trust and the parish council have also had this ditch by the Green and next to the Reading room carpark cleared. I would like to thank Councillors Garrod and Durham and their fellow flood wardens for their hard work in delivering this.

Maintenance of Roads and Verges

The Parish Council organised its usual verge cutting program and continued to provide street lighting for the village. Limited progress was also made with getting potholes repaired and gullies and drains cleared. This continues to be a never-ending task and there are still many potholes to fix.

MAVS – Speed Indicator Sign

The council continues to use its two mobile activated vehicle signs which show the speed of vehicles passing through the village. These have definitely helped to improve road safety, and a considerable amount of data has been collected which shows a small number of people driving through the village at speeds above 35 miles per hour. I would like to thank Councillor Russell for all his hard work in looking after MAVS and processing its data.

Grass and hedge maintenance in the village

The Council continued with its program of grass cutting and hedge trimming around the war memorial, at the Church end playing field and the play area on The Green.

Play Areas

An annual safety inspection of this equipment has also been carried out by an outside expert to ensure it meets current safety standards with the recommendations raised are in the process of being implemented alongside all other necessary maintenance work.

Annual Budget for the parish

I am pleased to report to report that the council felt it only necessary to increase in Precept for 2026/27 by one per cent so minimising the cost increase for parishioners.

Finally, I would like to end by again thanking all my fellow councillors and our Clerk for their time and effort in supporting the work and objectives of the council.

District and County Councillor's Annual Report 2026

County Council

Kingsway Solar Farm

A few years ago, our area was approached by a solar developer with plans for a very large solar farm in the fields around Balsham, West Wrating, Weston Colville and Carlton. If the plans are granted planning permission it would be one of the largest solar farms in the country and would be larger than Heathrow Airport, Newmarket or the built-up parts of Cambridge. The process is that the applicant has engaged in an 'informal consultation' at the back end of 2024 and is ran a 'formal consultation' in the summer of 2025. Thank you to everyone that engaged with this process, we hope you will keep the energy up to continue this engagement through the entire process.

The next phase will be that the developers submit a formal application to a government planning inspector. Due to the scale of the proposal, the final decision will be made by a government planning inspector rather than by any of the local councils.

There is a local action group, Kingsway Solar Community Action -

<https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk/> - who have done some very good work on putting together detailed comments on the scheme. If you are against the proposal, please do consider

engaging with them. Full plans can be seen on the Kingsway Solar website - <https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk/>

Local Government Reorganisation

In 2024, the government announced that it had plans to reduce the number of local councils in the country and merge them into what are called unitary authorities – this would mean one local council that delivered all of the services that the District and County Councils currently undertake.

The government asked local councils to put forward proposals for what they saw as sustainable geographic areas for these new unitary councils to operate in. Where we are in South Cambridgeshire the starting point for us is a joint council that covers the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire areas. This is because a lot of the services, such as waste collection, planning and legal, are currently shared already. There could be a case to extend the area to include either Huntingdonshire or East Cambridgeshire areas but the starting point for negotiations will be the Cambridge City/South Cambridgeshire combination. These options were submitted to government in 2025.

We now wait to hear what their preferred option is in June, and this will then be consulted on further. The elections to what's called the 'Shadow Authority' of these new councils will be in May 2027. This shadow authority will spend the year setting up the committees, allocating budgets and appointing senior staff etc. The Council will then come into power in May 2028 and the District and County councils will cease to be at this point too.

We appreciate that the majority of people won't care what form their local council takes, as long as the services provided continue in as an efficient manner as possible. However, a change of this magnitude represents a significant upheaval, in local government terms, so a big decision.

District Council

Cambridge Growth Company

Successive governments have announced that they saw Cambridge as a major area for growth in the country. To facilitate this, they are in the process of setting up a Development Corporation (DevCo) to manage the growth in the area from an economic and strategic perspective.

We currently have the Cambridge Growth Company, which will ultimately become the new DevCo, who are going through the process of identifying the area they want to look at parcels for development in and also what would be defined as a 'Strategic Site'. This is essentially the size a development would be before the DevCo took the planning decision on it away from the local planning authorities and made it themselves. There was a public consultation on this number earlier this year and we encouraged people to respond with the highest of the numbers offered – 1000 houses or over. This is to keep as many planning decisions within local government as possible, to maintain an element of control over what is built in our part of the county.

There will be more to come on this, so keep reading the local press.

Local Plan

Having said all of that, the District Council still needs to go through the process of submitting its latest version of its 'Local Plan' to government. This is the plan for where they see developments going over the next 30 years.

They are proposing that the South Cambridgeshire/Cambridge area needs more housing and have suggested sites around the district that can take the housing. One of these areas is Grange Farm to the north of Abington. What is being proposed here is a significant new settlement of up to 6000 houses plus other facilities. The District Council consulted on this proposal earlier this year and thank you to all those that responded with their thoughts. Of course, a scheme of this size will be controversial, as the scale of it would mean a significant disruption and a change in our local landscape for the foreseeable.

The next phase of this process is that the District Council will need to make any changes that it thinks it needs to, following the consultation, and then republish a final version of the plan with a view to submitting it to government in December this year. There will be more opportunities to formally put your views forward, which will likely be at the back end of the summer.

Food Waste Collection

It is planned to introduce a separate food waste collection this year. This is Government policy and we are obliged to introduce the new scheme. It will mean having a caddy for food only, it will no longer be possible to add food waste to the green bin. This is a major operation for the District Council requiring an additional 22 vehicles and around 75 new staff. Much of the initial costs are met by Government grants, but not all. There will be an extra cost that will need to be met out of the council's resources. The roll out of this scheme has started in South Cambridgeshire and our part of the district is one of the last to receive the new food bins, around September time.

Local Elections

The District Council held its last ever election in May this year, before it is subsumed by local government reorganisation. Geoff was re-elected to represent the villages within the Balsham ward. We thank everyone for their continued support and, whether you voted for Geoff or not, we will continue to do our best for the area.

More widely the Liberal Democrats had quite a successful day, winning 43 out of the 45 seats on the District Council.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 19.14.