

Notice is hereby given of
ALDERTON'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2023
To be held in the Village Hall Wednesday 24th May at 7pm

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Introduction from the Chair
3. Thanks to Keith Page
4. Latest Development Matters
5. Playing Field / Allotments Update
6. Written Reports: received from the following:

Parish Council Chairman	Alderton Acorns	Newsletter
Planning Matters	Village Shop	Gardening Club
The Vicar	Gardeners' Arms	
Churchwarden	Greenfield Trust	
Church Bell Ringers	Village Hall	

7. AOB

Members of the public are welcome to attend, parishioners encouraged to attend but only persons registered as Local Government Electors from the Parish of Alderton are entitled to vote.

ALDERTON PARISH COUNCIL – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

This has been a difficult year for the Parish Council. We lost our very experienced Parish Clerk over a year ago and during the year have not succeeded in getting continuity in support in this very important role. We are now very pleased that our new Parish Clerk, Cathie Bridges, has started this week. Our long term Chair, Keith Page also stood down from this role at the start of the year although he has continued as an invaluable Councillor until now. I will say more about Keith at the meeting.

We have, of necessity, needed to continue with Councillors taking on the role of Chair on a rotating basis. We are, however, very pleased to say that as we enter a new term of office we have two new councillors, Paul Woodman and Martin Davies joining myself, Dennis Rayton, Nicki Broderick and John Kettle. It has also been a very busy year from a planning viewpoint. We have had to argue our corner in a Planning Inquiry for land east of St Margaret’s Drive and had to work on objections to proposals on land west of Willow Bank Road and south of Dibden Lane. We also heard that unfortunately we had lost the Planning Inquiry for what is commonly known as CALA2.

Our allotments (now over 80 in total) continue to be very popular and we are hoping to build on establishing good relations with the Allotment Association. There has been a bit of coming and going of teams on the Playing Field and we are sorry to hear about the demise of our local football team, Alderton FC. The children’s playground continues to be well used and we have a small team of parents checking on a regular basis that all is in good working order. Keith Page has pursued Gloucestershire Highways during the year about various issues associated with roadways.

The Parish Council hope that you will bear with us for a bit as we endeavour to keep on top of our responsibilities and to do our best to stop unnecessary housing development. The Parish Council depends on support from the village perhaps best exemplified recently by the 15 villagers who spoke directly to the Planning Inquiry.

Mike West Acting Chair, Parish Council.

ALDERTON PARISH COUNCIL - Planning Update 2022-2023

This year has been a very busy year on the Planning Front for the Parish Council and the village. Tewkesbury Borough Council finally had their Local Plan approved last summer and was able to finally claim they had identified a required 5 year housing land supply for the Borough. Unfortunately, in December the higher tier Joint Core Strategy for Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester City Councils became five years old and as such the housing need requirements for the Borough once again needs to be reassessed, which has resulted in a higher figure being required. Whilst Tewkesbury Council is claiming it has identified sufficient sites to meet the required need – this is being challenged by developers, and hence we are currently being inundated by various housing schemes on the edges of the village.

First to arrive was the development of 53 houses on land to the rear of St Margaret’s Drive – application ref 22/00624/OUT. The scale of the scheme has been reduced to 47 units and despite 150 letters of objection from the village – was the subject of an appeal Public Inquiry in April 2023. Alderton Parish Council were a party to the proceedings – putting our case on behalf of the residents over a six day period, with 15 villagers speaking directly at the Inquiry. We await the decision – no timescale has been provided for this. We anticipate this could be two to three months. We will disseminate the decision to the village as soon as it is received.

The next major housing development submission relates to land at the rear of 52-74 Willow Bank Road for 56 dwellings – application ref 22/00998/FUL. Submitted in September 2022 – this application has received 130 plus objections including those of the Parish Council. Whilst the applicants sought to have an appeal conjoined with the St Margaret’s Drive appeal – this was refused by the Planning Inspectorate. As such it appears this application is being held in abeyance until the St Margaret’s Drive appeal is determined. We will update the Parish as and when further information is received on this application.

Lastly, a 26 unit rural exceptions housing site was received by Tewkesbury in February 2023 on Dibden Lane – application ref 23/00204/FUL. A number of serious issues with this scheme have been raised with the Planning Officer dealing with the case – and it has been noted that several important reports have not to date been submitted. We have been advised by the Planning Officer that they have raised several concerns with the agent for the application and await their response. Once received we will be re-consulted and will notify everyone. To date 90 letters of objection have been received and we would encourage those who have not to date made their views known to send in their views.

Alderton Parish Council

VICAR'S REPORT January 2022 – December 2022

The Annual Report is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of our church wardens, treasurers, secretaries, committees, choir, organists, alongside those who decorate our churches, plus many volunteers and parishioners who have contributed to our mission of bringing the love of Christ within our communities.

As we reflect on the past year, we are grateful for the many blessings we have received, despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. We have continued to adapt and innovate in order to continue to serve our communities, and we should be pleased of what we have accomplished, despite the difficulties. Our worship services have been a source of comfort and strength for many throughout the pandemic. We have continued to hold in-person services but have not continued online services due to the poor Wi-Fi connection in our churches.

In addition to our regular worship services, we have offered a variety of alternative services within our parishes for example Café Church, Harvest, Creation & Animal thanksgiving services and Carols in the Churchyard.

Looking ahead we are excited about the possibilities for the coming year. We acknowledge the ongoing challenges of looking after historic buildings but we are determined that we will continue to adapt and innovate, whilst exploring using our churches as community buildings, as we work to bring the love of Christ to our communities

We are committed to serving those who are most in need, and we will continue to explore our outreach efforts to meet the changing needs of our communities.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all mentioned above for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. It is through your efforts that we are able to accomplish our mission of bringing the love of Christ to our communities. I am proud to be a part of these wonderful communities, and I look forward to what we may be called to accomplish together in the coming year.

Rev'd Julia Hook

CHURCHWARDENS REPORT January 2022 – December 2022

In March 2022, Lindon Bowley replaced and painted the gutter on the north side of the Church. He also quoted for work in the back vestry, namely:

- 1) To move the wooden Higford plaque to inside the main body of the Church.
- 2) To take down the shelf with the vases and replace with some wooden wall units courtesy of Helen West. His quote was a reasonable £160, and the work went ahead.

Also in March, Ivona McIlwraith organised Ecoclean to shampoo the carpets in the back vestry and outside the Vicar's vestry; and also the pulpit carpet – this was paid for with the money raised in memory of Carla Edelston at her funeral service.

On March 23, the Churchwardens and PCC Secretary met for tea with Bishop Rachel in Tewkesbury Park Hotel. This was an informative occasion.

There was a Memorial Service for Beryl Ollive on June 29 at Alderton Church. Beryl was a much loved former member of the Church, the PCC and of the choir. She is sadly missed as is Carla Edelston.

Following an inspection, the gravestones of 11 people were laid flat, having been found to be loose in the ground, to avoid any accidents:
All but one has been repaired.

Gift Day was on 16 July, and was a great success. In all, £2,185.23 was raised. Harvest Supper took place on 23 September, and made £714. The Christmas Fayre was held on 10th December between 2pm and 4pm and was a great success and had the usual stalls. In a way, this marked our re-emergence after COVID. There was the Christmas Raffle, of course, and a visit from Father Christmas. John Williams was excellent in that role (as ever). In all, we made £3,000, a fantastic achievement. Sarah and Will Hughes created a second excellent Alderton calendar and raised £1080 – fantastic. Thanks to everyone concerned.

Finally, an ongoing saga with Gigaclear has been resolved. Initially, the firm wanted to lay Fibre Optics through the Churchyard. After discussions involving the DAC, it has been agreed that the Fibre Optics should go along Church Road, on the periphery of the Churchyard. One cable will need to be taken across to an existing pole, but this will be aerial. Problem solved.

Mike Newman

BELLRINGERS' REPORT: 2022 saw the restrictions on ringing following Covid being lifted, meaning that things could start getting back to normal, but as in many towers, ringing has suffered due to Coronavirus - and many ringers have lost confidence in their abilities. At present, as we have a very small ringing room, we do not feel ready to entertain more than one or two visiting ringers from other towers at any one time. We did a lot of ringing last year for the Queen's Jubilee and after her death.

We have 11 ringers, including one who is recovering from an operation and unable to ring for the time being. It therefore, unfortunately, does not take many of us to be on holiday or sick for numbers go below the minimum for ringing. Practice night is now alternate Wednesdays which along with Sunday service ringing we try to maintain.

(2023 The Highlight this year was ringing before Bishop Rachel's visit. We also rang to mark the Accession of King Charles. We are looking forward to ringing to celebrate the Coronation)

Paul Smith Tower Captain

Alderton Acorns Report

We have had a very successful year at Alderton Acorns. We have recruited a new Play Lead Ellie and have recruited new qualified staff. The number of children has massively increased over the year and we have now extended our opening days to Fridays also. We have Boogie beats and Reggie Robot Phonics come in to run some sessions for the children during the term and also run our own forest school session every Friday! We have enjoyed taking part in lots of celebrations and festivals, making the crowns for the letter hunt for the Kings coronation and many other things!

We have recently fundraised for new furniture and soft furnishings which has created a bright, clean, exciting setup for the children to explore. Our children are thriving here at Preschool and we are looking forward to the years ahead. Toddlers has been a success too, bringing new families to the village to play and encouraging children to play in a safe, clean environment.

Alderton Acorns Pre-school Play Lead

Alderton Village Hall Report

After a year of consolidation following the pandemic and the effects of lockdown, the Village Hall is seeing considerably more use than in the previous year, with continued bookings from regular clients - Alderton Acorns, Alderton Gardening Club, Yoga and Pilates classes - as well as an increased number of privately booked social events. The Village Hall Committee is very grateful to those clients for their continued support.

2023 has also seen an increase in Village Hall Committee run events including the very popular Saturday Coffee Mornings, Soup & Pud event and an inaugural Canine Coffee Morning when we welcomed our four legged friends and their well-behaved owners! Villagers kindly donated vintage crockery which has now been used at each event, and was also loaned to the Church for an Afternoon Tea and Prosecco event held in the hall. A wine tasting event was also organised in association with Broadway Wines and this proved to be very popular. These events were very well supported by residents from Alderton and surrounding villages and raised much needed funds for the village hall. A Social Committee has now been set up with new initiatives already under way.

The Annual Produce Show drew considerable support from exhibitors and was very well attended by those wishing to admire the fruit and Veg of other villagers' efforts.

These events could not go ahead without the continued support of the Village Hall Committee and sterling efforts from volunteers from the Alderton community. A huge thank you goes to those villagers who give so much of their time (and cash!) to ensure Village Hall events are so successful.

Our cleaners have once again made sure the hall has been kept to a high standard and the hirers have also played their part in keeping the hall clean and in good condition for other users.

The Village Hall Committee was very grateful to Tewkesbury Borough Council for providing a COVID Recovery grant of just under £1,000 which was used for supplies for village hall events. We would also like to thank Greenfields Trust for providing funds for the Committee to purchase heating controls.

Following the survey where we asked Alderton villagers for their views on the village hall, and with support and advice from Gloucestershire County Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council, the Village Hall Committee has now been sourcing surveyors and architects with a view to obtaining ideas and quotes to upgrade the Village Hall. We plan to keep villagers informed of progress so they can see the benefits this refurbishment will bring to our community!

Sarah Hughes

Alderton Village Store Report 2022/2023

With the start of 2022, (after surviving Covid in 2021), I was happy to get back to a bit of normality. Unfortunately, around May last year I developed some health problems.

For this reason I had to close the shop a few times, and sometimes for few days each month for my operation and hospital visits. Not being able to give a good service, resulted in unhappy residents & customers, and therefore sadly the shop has lost lots of its regular customers.

During my illness I realized that it is time to think about my retirement & I think the business needs fresh blood too. So as many of you are aware I would like to sell the business (See Alderton Facebook) The sale of the Post Office is a bit more complicated than the shop itself. Therefore it may take longer for the buyer to get training & the licence from the Post Office.

There are some rumours going around that the shop is sold already. THIS IS NOT TRUE.

This type of rumour is not very helpful for the business & could put customers off coming to the shop. I shall let you know if & when I find a buyer for the business. Meanwhile I shall carry on as normal (my health permitting)

Last September, while in hospital, I lost my dear mother. Sadly I could not go to Iran then. I am now planning to go for some family business probably around the end of August for four weeks. It would be wonderful if someone could step in to help to keep the shop open during my time off.

I like to thank you all for your moral support and specially those of you whom still use the shop. I do my best to give you a better service this year.

Yari Aram

Gardeners Arms Report

The past 12 months, since coming out of Covid restrictions, have been the most challenging for the hospitality industry and ourselves in living memory.

Trade last year is currently on a par with 6 years ago, which represents a fall in sales of 39%, whilst costs and general expenses have risen by 82%. - In the most part we have seen consumer habits change post Covid, resulting in less people now frequenting the pub and this coupled with crippling cost of living increases in utilities, food and drink products, supplier cost increases and wage inflation but to name a few, the net result is the pub made a record loss. In addition, we, as does the rest of hospitality continue to struggle to find experienced staff to fill the places of those that left the trade during the lockdown period. We expect current trading difficulties to continue for the next 18 months, due to cost of living increases, mortgage costs going up, changed social habits and paying back on Covid loans and deferments. Despite all these challenges we continue to invest into the fabric of the business and have started monthly bar and restaurant promotions to encourage people to return. The quiz nights have proved very popular and if anyone has any cost effective and constructive help to offer we are always open to new ideas – we need your support to help the predicament we find ourselves in.

We live in perfect storm' right now and whilst we continue to fight to find a way to keep the doors open, it will come as no big surprise to anyone that the dynamics of the pubs current operations must change to match the challenging times we all face. If we fail to attract more people back through our doors, then the inevitable closure of the Gardeners Arms will happen by the end of this year and the village that we all dearly love will lose one of its main focal points.

Mike & Wendy Wakeman

Green Fields Trust

Green Fields Trust is a Charitable Trust set up by local inhabitants to distribute community benefit funding (now over £5,000 a year flowing from Gretton Solar Farm Limited, the company that runs the solar farm at Lower Stanley. Now the turnover is more than £5,000, we are currently in the process of registering with the Charity Commission. The ultimate owners of Gretton Solar Farm Limited are Bluefield Solar Income Fund, who acquired Gretton Solar Farm from the previous owners, CTF on 20th January 2020. They also undertake the operation of the installation.

With this funding, Green Fields Trust has continued to fund projects in the community in Alderton and Gretton. In the last years to March 2022 we were able to make grants to:

- **Alderton Village Hall** - to renew the lighting with energy efficient LED alternatives in two separate phases
- **Alderton Allotment Association** - to provide water butts and compost bins for allotment holders
- **Gretton Village Hall Association** - to install energy efficient alternative heating technology
- **Oak Hill C of E Primary School** - to fund equipment and materials to augment Forest School and outdoor learning environments
- **Alderton Acorns Preschool** to establish a wildlife garden and support Forest School staff training
- **Alderton Village Hall** - Automation of hall heating controls

- **Alderton Allotment Association** - Communal bays for compost and farmyard manure

There are opportunities to apply for funding every six months on 31 March and 30 September. Alderton continues to be most active in identifying opportunities - thank you! Since the pandemic, funds have started to build so there begins to be scope for funding one or two larger and more imaginative projects which fit the funding criteria. Funding criteria (mostly with a renewable theme), application forms and more information about the Trust can be found at www.greenfieldstrust.co.uk.

We are also interested in finding one or more additional voluntary Trustees to join the existing team, which meets briefly, no more than twice a year and shares the responsibilities for chairing and minuting meetings. What do we do:

- Ensure that the local communities in Alderton, Gretton and Prescott Parishes are aware of us, our objectives and of available funding..
- ...through maintenance of a website, and of social media presence locally
- Consider funding applications for the benefit of local groups
- Ensure that applications for funding are in line with the trust deed and objectives
- Monitor progress of the the projects through to completion to ensure that funds are spent as intended in the application and the application objectives are achieved

Please contact the trustees at greenfieldstrust2015@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out by being a trustee.

Ken Roles

Alderton Village Newsletter

After the newsletter being in Caroline Page's safe hands for many years, Mary Merheim took over the editorship at the start of 2023. It's not been an easy transition however. With the encouragement of many villagers the decision was made to make it digital with paper copies being available in the Shop and the Church for those without access to the internet. Problems with a printer made this tricky, but thanks to an extremely generous donation (from an anonymous villager) of a brand new printer, paper copies are back in circulation.

The digital issue has proven to be very popular and we have 167 people now signed up to receive monthly issues by email through the village website.

Due to being digital, the newsletter is now larger and has more contributions from more sources. The aim is for every group, charity and business in the village and surrounding area to share information via the newsletter for the benefit of the residents.

Great Washbourne residents still have paper copies delivered thanks to Jane Kent.

Contact aldertonnews@gmail.com

Mary Merheim

Alderton Gardening Club report May 2022-May 2023

As chairman I am pleased to report of a successful 12 months for our club. We have continued to re-build our membership, finances and confidence following the covid 19 pandemic when we couldn't meet for 18 months.

After re-starting the monthly meetings in October 2021 we continued to experience lower attendances in the first half of the year, a 30% drop on our pre-pandemic numbers. However by

Autumn 2022 these levels began to rise once again, and at the time of this report we are back up to a meeting average of 50 + people attending.

Membership numbers have also continued to rise and we have recently passed the pre-covid highest total of 97. Encouragingly 24% of the AGC members now reside outside of Alderton. Perhaps we may have to consider re-naming ourselves the Alderton and District gardening club?

During the last year we held 12 monthly meetings each with a guest speaker. A particular highlight was in July when we welcomed back the return of Terry Walton the much celebrated allotment gardener from the Rhondda valley. This event was sold out, and did more than any other to help us into the black with our finances. We posted a small three figure profit for the year, this despite our earlier lower attendance numbers, and increased operating and speaker fees costs.

This September for our monthly meeting on the 14th, we will be welcoming the much admired horticulturalist, broadcaster, writer and garden designer Chris Beardshaw. With 4 months to go we have already sold 83 tickets for this special evening!

Publicising the club has been another key to our successful year. Achieving this through displaying posters, through our own, and other locally based Facebook groups, through regular plugs on BBC Radio Gloucestershire along with the Alderton village's newsletter and website.

Members have continued to receive benefits through joining the club, with discounted bags of compost, seed potatoes and onion sets from Vale Gardens Ltd of Badsey. Also at Christmas time and our club's annual birthday anniversary in April with extra drinks and food being provided for these meetings. We have also part subsidised the coach travel expenses for our sold out club trip to RHS Wisley next month.

At the beginning of 2023 a modest rise in our meeting entrance fees, of 50p extra for members (now £3), and £1 extra (now £6) for non members was felt to be needed to help out with increased costs. I believe though despite this, the club is still offering an affordable, value for money experience at our meetings.

None of the aforementioned would have been achieved without the hard work and efforts of my fellow committee members. So from me, a big thankyou to them all.

In summary I consider that currently the Alderton Gardening club is in a very healthy position, with sound finances, a still growing membership & rising meeting attendances. With the high quality speakers we are able to sign, I believe the AGC regularly provides an attractive evening's entertainment.

We will continue to canvas our members opinions about their club and it's activities, and we will endeavour to implement their ideas & wishes. The club's committee will also aim to give back benefits to them when financially prudent to do so. We will always though strive to retain healthy contingency funds for any "rainy days" .

The AGC is the largest membership club in the Parish, and what has been achieved in it's 5 years of existence, has been nothing short of fabulous. So here's to another enjoyably successful year!

Tom Cullimore, Chairman
Alderton Gardening Club