



ALDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN 2025 -2029



Revision 1

January 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 This business plan is part of Aldenham Parish Council's (APC) strategy documents on how it will plan, carry out and review its functions and commitments to the residents of the parish.

1.2 These principles are as follows

- a) **To manage its open space and assets in a way that benefits the residents of Aldenham.**
- b) **To represent the residents of Aldenham in discussions with other levels of 'Local Government', third party developers, charities and groups.**
- c) **To look for opportunities to offer other services locally to residents.**

1.3 This plan will set out a focus for how the council will meet its obligations, improve/enhance the open space/buildings it is responsible for and respond to the increasing demands on it from residents and Government.

1.4 This plan will also be part of any future APC application for external funding and the 'Quality Gold' Local Council Award.

2. This Business Plan

2.1 This business plan sets out the APC vision, its objectives and key priorities that it will endeavour to deliver during the period of the plan, either by itself or through collaboration and possibly influence on relevant third parties such as Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC), Hertfordshire County Council (HertsCC), or local charitable organisations and volunteer groups.

2.2 This business plan will form the blueprint for what APC will focus on over the next few years. Its aim is to give a clear picture to the residents, local community groups and other stakeholders/partners, and to enable the council to perform in a consistent and coordinated way. The business plan will be reviewed each year around budget planning time, and will form the basis of the next year's and future budgets. This will include ensuring there are sufficient funds, resources and equipment to achieve the objectives.

2.3 This will be a 'live' document which will be updated and published annually as part of the council's papers for the annual parish meeting.



3. The Parish of Aldenham

- 3.1 Radlett is the principal village in the Parish of Aldenham, forming part of the Borough of Hertsmere. It lies within the valley of Tykes Water, a stream that flows north from Aldenham Reservoir to the River Colne. It is situated between St Albans to the north, Elstree and Borehamwood to the south, and Watford to the west. Lying to the northwest of London, just within the M25 motorway, it is surrounded by areas of Green Belt land.
- 3.2 The village's main shops are on the High Street, approximately half a mile south of the recreation ground. The High Street provides local shopping facilities for residents of the village. It has a wide range of shops and restaurants including a Post Office, supermarkets and independent stores. A feature of the village is the Radlett Centre, with facilities including a 300-seat auditorium, meeting rooms used by local residents, APC committee meetings, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, family and communal gatherings, and a variety of organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, business consultants, Health Advisory clinics and Weightwatchers. The APC offices are also based in the Radlett Centre, and a separate part of the building is occupied by HertsCC Library Service.
- 3.3 Locally the film industry is also a major factor for the area. Borehamwood has been called the British Hollywood, and the film industry has played a leading role in the development of the area, providing employment and laying the foundations for economic growth.
- 3.4 Although Radlett is one of the more prosperous places in Britain (Times on Line Property, timesonline.co.uk dated 22 March 2014) both Aldenham East ward and Aldenham West ward are ranked as amongst the top 1% of least deprived areas in England (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015). The settlement (known locally as "the village") contains many substantial detached houses with large gardens. The older centre has a few streets of Victorian semi-detached and terraced houses. Over the past few years, the combination of the proximity to London and good transport links have meant that Radlett has become a property hotspot with the price for detached houses currently well above £1 million.

3.5 According to the 2021 census, Radlett has a population of 10,060.

3.6 Outside Radlett, but within the parish, are a number of small villages and hamlets, namely Letchmore Heath, Aldenham, Patchetts Green, Roundbush and High Cross. APC maintains green space in all the above except High Cross and Roundbush.

4. Management of the Council.

4.1 There are three tiers of local government within the area, all with their own responsibilities.

4.2 **APC** is the first and most local tier of government. It has an important role to play in representing the local population. It also maintains over 65 acres of open space which, during and since Covid, has become a vital part of the well-being of residents. The council meets monthly (except August) and has two committees, Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) and Planning, with delegated decision-making powers, and several working parties that make recommendations to the full council on subjects such as the Radlett Neighbourhood Plan and allotments. All committee and council meetings are open to the public to attend.

4.3 **Councillors** - The strategy and policies of the council are provided by the twelve councillors who represent two wards, Aldenham East and Aldenham West (6 from each ward). There are elections every four years, and the last was in May 2023, when ten of the current councillors were elected. Two others elected in 2023 have stepped down, and have been replaced by two members co-opted by the remaining ten. Councillors are not volunteering in the general meaning, firstly as the council is not part of the voluntary and faith sections as defined under the charity commission. Secondly, Local/Parish Councils are the lowest tier of local government, making them the closest to its residents, so a councillor is in 'public office' albeit unpaid, and in the case of APC, is responsible for policy on 65 acres of 'Open Space', various buildings (some of which are on leased to APC) and at least nine members of staff. In theory, it employs only the Council Manager, and they recruit the staff who they feel are necessary to carry out the functions of the council. The council is also responsible for raising a 'precept' - annual funding for the council to help it carry out its functions from council taxpayers and then to use this wisely.

4.4 Each year at the Annual Meeting of the council, a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the council is appointed, as well as membership of the committees and working parties. Also appointed then are representatives of the council on outside bodies such as the Radlett Centre Trust and Radlett Village Institute. This is another way in which APC receives information on the needs of the community.

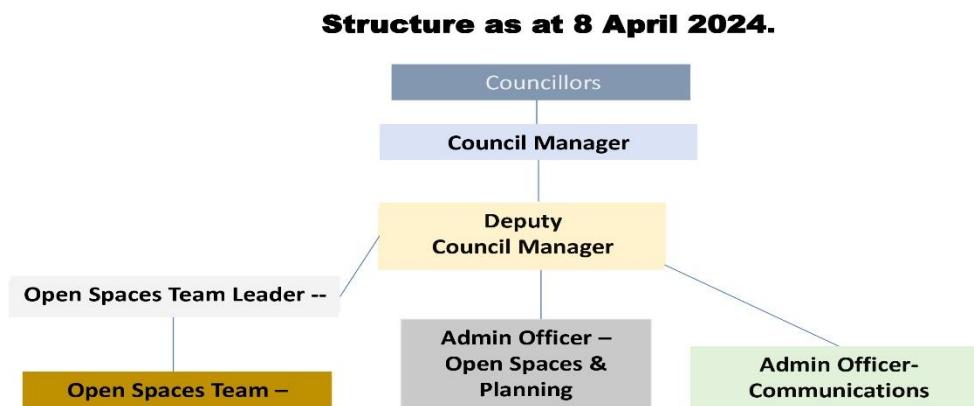
4.5 Councillors are unpaid and only receive travel expenses if they claim them when they are representing the council on an outside function where travelling is required.

4.6 **HBC** is the second tier of local government, responsible for planning permissions, environmental health, waste management, housing, car parking and street cleaning.

4.7 **HertsCC** is the third tier, and has responsibilities for social care, education, highways, rights of way, and libraries.

4.8 APC Staff

The council employs nine staff. There are four administrative staff to manage the day to day requirements of delivering services to the residents, and five members of the Open Spaces Team who maintain the open space. The structure is as follows;



5. Financial Information

- 5.1 APC's main source of income is called the 'precept'. It is part of the council tax paid by householders within the parish, and is collected by HBC. For example, in 2024/25 (for a Band D property), the council tax fee for APC was £136.73, which was allocated to the APC precept for that year of £740,347. It is worth noting that as APC owns/maintains all the open space in the parish, residents receive a discount on the council tax that they pay to HBC.
- 5.2 In 2023/24, the council's total expenditure was £1.1m which was funded from the precept, and previous reserves built up or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is a contribution paid by developers building in the parish towards infrastructure.
- 5.3 In each annual budget, there are amounts allocated for future costs, which is good financial practice. Examples of this are replacement vehicles for the Open Spaces Team and Christmas Lights. These capital items are expenditure which the council know will need replacing, but to fund this from one year's precept would see large fluctuations in that year, so provision is made over a set period to build up the necessary funds. At the end of each financial year these funds are transferred to Earmarked Reserves in the name of the item they have been raised for.
- 5.4 APC will also look to other forms of funding that may be available, such as lottery funding, landfill tax etc. Having this plan will ensure that if these grants become available, some of the information required by the funder will be available.
- 5.5 The council also uses its funds to support local charities and voluntary group including;
- Radlett Centre Trust
 - Citizens Advice - who provide an outreach service at the Radlett Centre
 - Friends of Scrubbits Wood

5.6 **Reserves & Balances** - The F&GP consider the balances of the council's portfolio every January, when it provides the full council with a recommendation for the precept for the following financial year.

5.7 At the end of each financial year, the F&GP Committee will consider what 'un-spent' funds are available from the council's budget for that year, and move these into Earmarked or General Reserves. The auditor's guidance is that councils should hold approximately six months of operating costs in the General Reserve. Earmarked Reserves are for future council projects or predicted large expenditure.

5.8 The council also has Capital Reserves which have been accumulated from council assets that have been sold. Capital Reserves can only be allocated towards capital projects and cannot be used to subsidise everyday expenditure.

5.9 The F&GP Committee, annually also review the investments held by the council. The committee take a cautious risk approach to investments and is guided by the adopted investment strategy.

6. Council Portfolio

6.1 The council recognises the significance that open spaces has to its residents and visitors' well-being. It currently owns or lease over 65 acres of open space within the parish, which comprises of

- Two children's play areas



- Various copses



- Allotments (nearly 100 plots)



- KGV Playing Fields (home to TabardRFC and RadlettCC)
- Three village greens (Letchmore Heath, Aldenham, and Patchetts Green)



- Scrubbits Wood (home to Radlett Guides and Scouts)
- Phillimore Rec -- main field/open space for walking



- Radlett Bowls Club
- Multi Use Games Area and Outdoor Gym





APC is responsible for local ground maintenance across the parish. There are various uses for these pieces of land as detailed below.

Phillimore Recreation Ground is situated in the residential area of the village of Radlett. It is the larger of two recreation grounds within the Parish of Aldenham, having an area of over 10 acres of land that includes a Children’s Play Area, Open field, Fir Spring Wood, Allotments, a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and Outdoor Gym equipment. An area of the land is leased by Aldenham Parish Council (APC) to Radlett Bowls Club. In 2022 the park received a ‘Green Flag Award’ which it retained in 2023.



The King George V Playing Fields, is also within the village of Radlett. It comprises six fields of nearly 4 acres of land designated for formal sports and recreation. Two of these fields are leased to TabardRFC and RadlettCC, and one area is used by a local BMX Group for practice etc. Two fields are designated for just walking and recreational use, with one field being fenced in for those dog walkers who wish to train their dogs away from the public. There are also two Dells formed through gravel extraction many centuries ago, and have now been taken over by scrub and trees, but still accessible to some.

Salters Field - mainly used for exercise (walking). In 2022 APC/King Georges Fields Radlett Trust initiated a programme of planting new trees. Initially this was carried out in conjunction with Radlett Rotary Society as part of project to enhance the area.

There are further areas of open space within the parish that APC maintain, including the Letchmore Heath Children's Play area, pond and village green, Radlett Gardens (the green lung in the High Street), Scrubbitts Wood (an area of woodland for community access and the headquarters of the local Scout and Guide Associations, and Radlett Horticultural Society), Aldenham Green (an area maintained by Aldenham Parish Council for residents).

In 2023, Patchetts Green was added to the parish, and so APC took over maintaining the green by the Three Horseshoes Public House.

7. Plans going forward

In this section, the plans for the council are set out for each year, together with an action plan and possible funding streams. This section will be reviewed annually by the F&GP committee during:

- a) The budget review process setting the precept for the following year;
- b) The review of reserves;
- c) When CIL is received;
- d) When reviewing the council's investment portfolio.

YEAR 1 - 2025-26

In this year the following projects are to be considered and monies allocated towards them.

a) Phillimore Rec Improvements Phase 2 - Car Park

This is the final part of phase 2 of the improvements project and will involve

- (i) Resurfacing and marking out the car park
- (ii) The formation of a new footpath at the MUGA side
- (iii) Installing electric recharging points.

Plan of action -

- To ask IID to update plans that it drew up in 2023 and have pre-app talks with HBC to see if planning permission required.
- Ask QS to give outline figures on implementation costs and
- then if APC agree, draw up tender documents for review, plus contact companies regarding costs of supplying recharging points from supply to café.

Costs - Resurfacing, unknown, footpath £11,500 at 2024 prices, recharging points will be discussed with infrastructure supplier. Funding will be reviewed at June 2025 F&GP Committee meeting and when CiL funds become available.

b) Phillimore Rec Improvements Phase 2 - Car Park.

This is part of the Phillimore Rec Improvements Project, which looks at the entranceway to the park and the car park. This action point is to extend the footpath (which was widened across the main field in 2022) from the gate into the main field, alongside the hedge to link up with the footpath at Gills Hollow, and also to place markings on the junction to highlight the fact that pedestrians are

crossing. This has been agreed in principle with HertsCC Highways and HertsCC Cllr C Clapper.

Plan of action: APC, during 2024/25 to draw up for HertsCC a plan of what the new footpath will look like to help out HertsCC and to put pressure on them to provisionally agree the funding of the scheme by the HertsCC Cllr from May 2025.

Funding from HertsCC for footpath extension through HertsCC Councillor Highways Improvements budget. NB. HertsCC Cllr C Clapper cannot commit as there are county council elections in May 2025.

c) **Phillimore Rec Improvements Phase 3 -- Pathway to and around the Children's Play equipment.**

Assuming that planning permission has been granted in late 2024, there is only three years to implement this.

Plan of action, in 2025/26 review whether a pathway is still required, if so obtain a method statement for how this is carried out and obtain quotes for installation etc.

d) **TabardRFC lease.**

Whilst this technically comes under King Georges Fields Radlett Trust, APC is the sole trustee so will be expected to ultimately fund any costs in this area. The proposal here would be to work with the club and Fields in Trust to possibly renew their lease to allow the installation of Padel Tennis on land to the rear of the TabardRFC clubhouse.

Action Plan will need to ensure new rent for Tabard field reflects the increased income that TabardRFC receive as directed by Fields in Trust.

Cost minimal to KGV Trust as TabardRFC need the new lease so they will have to pay for KGV solicitors costs.

e) **Pegmire/Summerhouse Lane land owned by APC.**

Currently this land is part of the initial 'Call for Sites' as part of the HBC Draft Local Plan. Since its inclusion Patchetts Green has become part of the parish of Aldenham and APC have instigated the formation of a Patchetts Green Residents Association, who have indicated that they have concerns over the proposal and would like to see the area used for other purposes. Therefore

Action Plan -

- (i) Remove the dilapidated horses stable and remove the horsebox.
- (ii) Install new gates at both ends of land and then strim a path through so the public can view the land.
- (iii) Hold a consultation event at local venue to invite comments and ideas for the land that the council may consider.

Funding: - £4,500 for gates etc from EMR, and for consultation event allocated from Chairman's Allowance in 2025/26 budget.

YEAR 2 - 2026 - 27

In this year, the following projects are to be considered and monies allocated towards them;

- a) **Refurbishment of Letchmore Heath Pond** - In 2024 APC worked with several outside bodies investigating the state of the pond and possible solutions to improve the ambience. In 2025 the Council will review the reports including options such as



- drainage of the pond;
- removing the silt;
- build-up banks and island in the middle;
- reduce tree vegetation to increase light;
- possible installation of a water feature or other options for improving the circulation of water;
- and project manager costs.

Plan of action - There is an indication that the costs of restoration will be in excess of the £25,000 plus VAT limit in the APC adopted Financial Regulations, and will need to be advertised on the Government's Contracts Finder website. Therefore, the following will need to be actioned

- (i) Appoint a project manager.
- (ii) Draw up a method of works including discussions with HBC Planning regarding need for any permissions/environmental requirements.
- (iii) Apply for grant funding, and review once outcome of grant application known.
- (iv) Draw up tender for placing on Government Contract Finder website etc.

Funding through - Capital Reserves/CIL and application for Heritage Grant. Early 2026 apply for grant funding so works can commence first quarter of 2026/27.

- b) Review the access road to KGV Trust to decide whether to;

- (i) Renew the existing track from Cobden Hill into the car park.
- (ii) Option 2 to create an entrance/exit road that splits at the corner of the existing track and uses both the existing entrance on Cobden Hill and the entrance into the Rose Field from Cobden Hill.
- (iii) Option 3 - create a new track using the entrance at the bottom end of Salters Field, around this into the car park.
Then to cost these options plus any planning needs and Fields in Trust permissions.

Funding options to be considered once this decision is made. It could be a long term CiL commitment.

c) Neighbourhood Plan -

- (i) Review RNP - is it still relevant or does it need tweaking? The cost of review will be low as this can just be reviewed and resubmitted to the inspector. CM to check if consultation is required.
- (ii) At the same time consider whether to carry out a consultation regarding the rest of the parish.

Cost £20,000 possibly - there may be grants but this cost needs to be considered before embarking on the formation of the plan.

YEAR 3 - 2027-28

In this year the following projects are to be considered and monies allocated towards them;

f) **Phillimore Rec Improvements Phase 4 - Pathway around main field -- Install Breedon pathway from main footpath across P Rec to the entrance into Fir Spring Wood.**

This is part of the Phillimore Rec Improvements Project at which looks at the creation of a footpath around the perimeter of the main field. During consultation this has been requested by users of the park as the area can become muddy as well as some users wanting to run around the field as part of their regular exercise.

Plan of action - To draw up plans to provide a footpath that links the main footpath across Phillimore Rec with the entrance into Fir Spring Wood.

- (i) To draw up a method statement for the pathway, to include width and surface (probably Breedon gravel (the same as the entrance to the café).
- (ii) To ascertain whether this can be carried out by OST.
- (iii) Depending on (ii) then cost is just materials and any small equipment hire, if not estimates will be obtained as per APC adopted Financial Regs.
- (iv) Ascertain if planning permission is required.

Funding from Capital Projects Reserve once costs known.

YEAR 4 - 2028-29

In this year the following projects are to be considered and monies allocated towards them;

a) **Phillimore Rec Improvements Phase 4 -**

To implement the next footpath and link from the entrance/exit in Fir Spring Wood along the allotment fence to Bowls Club hedge -

Plan of Action - That following installation of the small footpath to Fir Spring Wood, in 2026/27 APC consult on the type of track that is required, is it just a footpath for the dog walkers in winter, or a more inclusive one for fitness etc.

Costs will be dictated by the outcome of the consultation, but monies will be allocated in the 2027/28 budget for this.

8. Areas outside APC control but will use its influence to bring about change

8.1 Infrastructure

Aim: To improve the visual aspects of the area.

To work with HertsCC on improvements to the Highways and Footpaths/Footways including regular hedge cutting, pothole repairs, signage, lighting and enhancements to the gateways to villages including areas where bulbs can be planted and hanging baskets added.

Aim: To improve Newberries Car Park.

To work with HBC to improve the surface and lighting within the car park and improve the access road and footway leading from Watling Parade.

8.2 Transport

Aim: Cycleways/Footpaths

- To improve the cycleways within the parish as set out in Radlett Neighbourhood Plan;
- To increase the number of cycles stands in the High Street;
- To liaise with HBC to facilitate the rollout of the 'Beryl Bikes' to encourage more cycling.

Aim: To achieve 'step-free' access to Radlett Railway Station.

To campaign through the Hertsmere MP for lifts to be installed at Radlett Railway Station.

Aim: To support the RYC Campaign for a bus service from Radlett to Stanmore.

8.3 High Street economy

Aim: To listen to the local shopkeepers through a 'Business Forum' and act on any concerns by either pointing the shopkeepers to, or acting as a conduit with other authorities where this could make a difference.

8.4 Local Community Groups and Charities

Aim: To support the sustainability of these groups, by advertising any vacancies they may have, and any activities that they need support on by using the APC 'Grants' fund for projects and to help in applying for other grants available.

8.5 Communication

Aim: To ensure that APC brings to the attention of other levels of local government the strength of feeling on certain subjects of local residents.

Aim: To engage with the local community in a two-way dialogue by;

- Producing a biannual newsletter delivered to all properties within the parish.
- Through regular posts on its own as well as popular local Facebook sites.
- Notices on the noticeboards around the parish.
- Articles in local newspapers.
- Production of an annual report plus this business plan which will be available in libraries and other local facilities.

- **Appoint representatives on local community groups, and provide a forum at each council meeting for that representative to report to council on the community group's activities.**
- **At each of its events APC will have a stall showing the work of the council and this will be manned for feedback and also consultations.**
- **Hold an Annual Parish Meeting open to all local residents giving them an opportunity to raise matters of concern to them.**

8.6 Health

Aim: To encourage access to Open Space and promote Health & Wellbeing

- **Through ensuring all land owned or leased by APC is well maintained and enhanced through tree planting, sufficient benches, and signage.**
- **To support the Citizens Advice outreach service at the Radlett Centre through grant funding.**
- **To support the Radlett Centre through grant funding and advertising of events at the venue.**
- **To support the RNP aim to provide an increased medical facility within the High Street of Radlett.**
- **To promote the activities of local groups who provide support for mental health and loneliness.**
- **Through the 'Access for All' working party to promote better access to shops etc.**
- **To support local sports clubs through grant funding, advertising their activities and by facilitating access for them to external funding.**

9.0 Devolution

9.1 In December 2024, Central Government announced the 'English Devolution White Paper.' This sets out how the government plans to transfer power out of Westminster through devolution and to fix the foundations of local government.

9.2 The government's long-term vision is for simpler structures which make it much clearer for residents who they should look to on local issues, with more strategic decisions to unlock growth and deliver better services for communities.

9.3 Devolution over a large strategic geography, alongside local government reorganisation, can drive economic growth whilst delivering optimal public services and beginning to fix the foundations of local government.

9.4 The proposal is that there will be the concept of a Strategic Authority which could be either;

- **Foundation Strategic Authorities: these include non-mayoral Combined Authorities and Combined County Authorities automatically, and any Local Authority designated as a Strategic Authority without a Mayor.**
- **Mayoral Strategic Authorities: the Greater London Authority, all Mayoral Combined Authorities and all Mayoral Combined County Authorities will automatically begin as Mayoral Strategic Authorities. Those who meet specified eligibility criteria may be designated as Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities. This unlocks further devolution, most notably an Integrated Settlement.**

- 9.5 The Government's strong preference is for partnerships that bring more than one Local Authority together over a large geography. In exceptional circumstances the Secretary of State will have the power to designate an individual Local Authority as a Foundation Strategic Authority only.
- 9.6 In Hertfordshire the County Council, and district/borough councils have not yet announced the level at which it will enter. Although it is noted that the government intends that the new local government structure will be in place during this parliament.
- 9.7 APC will need to be in discussions with HertsCC and HBC as it may be asked to consider taking on services.
- 9.8 APC will also review the assets and services that it may have the capacity to run either now, or in the future.
- 9.9 It will also be advantageous, once this list has been prepared to consult with local residents to ascertain whether they wish these services to remain. It is worth noting that, any new strategic authority may decide to only provide any statutory service, the list for which is very small.
- 9.10 This is a fast moving subject so APC through the Senior Management Team will need to keep a eye on developments and report progress quickly.