

Annual Report 2023-24





ALDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

ALL RESIDENTS OF RADLETT, LETCHMORE HEATH,
PATCHETTS GREEN AND ALDENHAM
ARE INVITED TO THE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

WHICH WILL BE HELD ON
MONDAY 13 MAY 2024 at 8pm
IN THE DOUGLAS HICKS ROOM, THE RADLETT CENTRE,
ALDENHAM AVENUE, RADLETT

ALL WELCOME

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE

Contents for the Annual Parish Meeting from the following:

The Chairman of Aldenhams Parish Council
King Georges Field Radlett Trust
Finance and General Purposes Committee
Planning Committee
Allotments Working Party
Access For All Working Party
RNP – Community Projects – Cycling/Footpaths
Events Working Party

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Chairman's Report

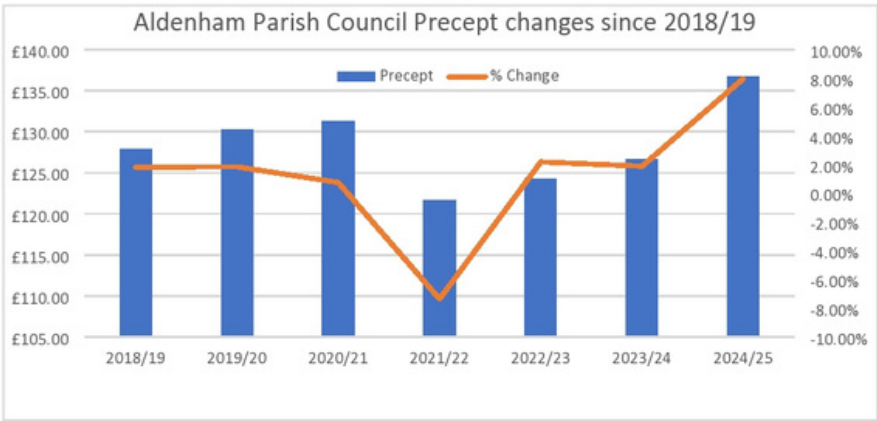


As has been the theme in recent years, Aldenham Parish Council (APC) has once again been very busy in the last year, not just with its day-to-day operations but with organising events, leading the fight against speculative planning applications and working on some major improvement projects at Phillimore Recreation Ground. We were also delighted to welcome Patchetts Green, who rejoined the parish after a boundary review conducted by Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC). They have formed a resident's association to liaise with the council as other villages do, and it is great to be working with them and giving them a voice on planning matters.

Planning Appeals

In addition to the fight against the Solar Plant – which we are delighted to have won – this year APC have also taken part in the Inquiry into the planning application on Land to the South of Shenley Hill. APC were a Rule 6 party, meaning we had a legal team and an expert witness to present our arguments and ensure that the over 2000 objections from local residents were not ignored. We were delighted that the Inspector agreed with the arguments laid out by HBC, ourselves and numerous local residents (through 'Save our Hertsmere') who worked together and with the council to co-ordinate their efforts and ensure that all key concerns were brought before the Inspector. Unfortunately, the developer has chosen to challenge this ruling and the decision is now subject to a Judicial Review, the outcome of which we await at time of writing.

These legal battles have been costly and, as a result, the council's generous reserves, built up by years of careful management, have been depleted. APC have had to take a hard look at their budget this year and reverse the cuts to the precept we made in 2020, when we reduced the precept by 7.35%, to support people at a time of great uncertainty. This year we are raising the precept by 7.98% to ensure we can meet our costs – a breakdown of which you will find in the Financial Report.



Events



One of the events we hosted this year was an event to celebrate the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. We screened the coronation live at the Phillimore Recreation Ground, with tables available for hire as at previous Jubilee. There was also food and drinks available for purchase, along with a small funfair for the children. After the coronation we screened the Paddington movie. It was fantastic to see so many come out and celebrate with us and that, despite the truly awful weather, Radlett's spirit still shone on!



In August, APC, in conjunction with 'Inspire All', were once again able to run the free children's summer activities over two weeks, which proved very popular despite one being another wet day. There was a great variety of activities for children of all ages, along with shows by Captain Calamity, which proved a great hit. The summertime activities were held at Phillimore Recreation Ground, which we are delighted to announce has once again been awarded Green Flag status.



The Winter Fair and Christmas lights switch-on was another popular event. We had a great turnout, especially for Santa's grotto where our VIP met almost 200 children in the 3 hours! There was also a wonderful selection of stalls and rides, while the lights were switched on by the delightful Dame Dotty and the winner of the school picture competition Hridhaan Pala. Our thanks go to the APC office staff who organised the whole event, as well as ensuring that all went smoothly on the day.



Phillimore Rec Improvements



APC is pleased that the project to improve the Phillimore Recreation Ground is moving at a steady pace, with hopes of completion this year – the playground refurbishments have been completed to redesign the area into ages, with infant, junior and senior areas. New equipment has also been installed, as well as accessible equipment such as a flush roundabout and bucket swing. The Café is also progressing with construction just beginning, with a completion date in the autumn. We are delighted to announce that Alex Black from the Shenley Tea Rooms will operate the café.



APC working to widen its appeal

APC have switched to designated working parties, to allow us to have more targeted groups that also allow members of the public to join. We are still legally required to have full council meetings, a planning committee and a finance committee but we now have working parties to address, among other things, improvements to Phillimore Recreation Ground, an Allotment Holders working party, Events working party and an Access for All working party. If you would like to join one of them, we would love to hear from you!

I'm sure all the councillors will join me in thanking all the staff at APC for their hard work. They have worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the office in another busy year, organised events and maintained the beautiful open spaces that include all of the King George V Playing Fields around Tabard Rugby and the Radlett Cricket Club, Scrubbitts Wood, Tykeside, Radlett Gardens, The Phillimore Recreation Ground, the village greens at Letchmore, Aldenham and Patchetts Green, as well as the hanging baskets and beds along the High Street.

To keep updated with all the latest news, please check out my monthly Chairman's Blog.

Cllr Helen Jones
Chair of Aldenham Parish Council



Allotments Working Party



The Allotments working party meet 4 times per year with the brief to assist the Parish Council in the management of the allotments. I chair the working party supported by Cllr David Lambert and with the assistance and help of three key allotment holders, Peter Hordern, Robin Crosher and Garry Walton.

The allotments are enjoyed by a wide range of local (they live all over the parish and Hertsmere) residents and the working party seeks to retain a balance between ensuring the allotments are enjoyed by the holders whilst recognising the allotments are a valuable Council asset and must be managed accordingly. To ensure plots are maintained and cultivated, inspections are held annually in early June to ensure the plots are being properly cultivated and maintained.

These Inspections are carried out by the Open Spaces Team at APC supported by a member of the working party. Any plot holder failing to meet the requirement for a well cultivated plot are advised and given around seven weeks to make amendments. A further inspection takes place in July. The allotment holder is asked to vacate the plot if after this further inspection the plot fails to meet requirements.



This year 14 allotments holders were asked to improve their plots in June and only 5 holders were asked to vacate their plots.

The vacated plots are offered to other local residents who have expressed an interest in having an allotment. The allotment year starts on 1 October and by that date in 2023, all 5 vacated plots had been relet.

We do have a small waiting list but over the last two years this has been cleared within a few months. We are encouraging residents new to holding an allotment to consider taking only half a plot. As full plots become available, we will be increasing the supply of half plots.

Having an allotment is a very sociable and enjoyable experience. The allotments are full of people in summer ready for a chat and an exchange of ideas. The allotment holders run a WhatsApp group used to share knowledge and availability of plants and produce.

Come along and join us!

Cllr John Graham
Chair of Allotment Working Party



Access For All Working Party



It is always prudent to open reports with a reminder of why this important working party exists. Aldenhams Parish Council (APC) formed the Access for All working party to coincide with the release of the Government's National Disability Strategy in 2021. Its aim remains to address the many aspects of our local environment, from high street walkways to parks and open spaces and community events, which could and should be more accessible for people of all ages with any level of disability – visible and otherwise.

APC's Access for All working party is committed to our community becoming a positive example of inclusion and equity. Participants come from differing political persuasions and as a group we continually identify how inclusion might be put at the heart of activity, environment and daily life.

Indeed, the group has already made a positive impact across the board, from the way we plan and communicate to having a tangible impact on local environment. We have adapted all communications, booking processes and print design with access in mind, as well as introducing a variety of new ways people can find support to access information and people that can help (including direct access email addresses, phone numbers, talking newspapers and accessible web tools). In terms of physical access to events, we have also streamlined a new standard approach which includes disabled parking, fast passes for those that find queuing an issue, more seating options, better signage and staff on hand to extend support and understanding. This has made a huge difference to families and has resulted in more people joining us for celebrations and community events who may not have felt accommodated previously.

As well as changing the approach to existing operations, the working party has also taken steps to support future planning in the form of the commissioned and now complete Access Audit (an independent survey of our local high street conducted by Disability Watford) and the extending of our first survey targeted to carers and those living with disability of any kind.



In December 2023, we also staged an Autism Training morning in partnership with Radlett Lodge School, a first opportunity to spread awareness, highlight key information and support parents of children with autism and other SEND needs. This was a wonderful opportunity to show our support for Radlett Lodge School (a National Autistic Society school) share the work of the working party and hear voices from the community about the challenges and fears they face. This was so successful, in February 2024 we hosted a coffee morning with special guests from professional arenas to support and advise gathered parents and carers.



The next step with outreach is to continue to signpost services and information for the community through events and online, highlight the work of the party such as its impact on phased works to create a more accessible playground at Phillimore Park and offer more events for carers to gather and find support. We are also committed to acting on the accessibility audit and will strive to engage business, Hertsmere Council and places of worship with its outcomes through 2024.



Our message to the community is clear. “If you are disabled or have a medical condition, are a carer, or have someone in your family living with the challenges of disability or age-related issues such as dementia or want to drive equality in our community for any reason – the Access for All working party would love to hear from you. **You are not alone**”.

Cllr Clare Diskin
Chair of Access For All Working Party



Planning Committee Report



We have had a busy time, meeting every couple of weeks and have been analysing and commenting on more than 200 applications over the year, as well as a few serious challenges to our green belt!

Most residents know that Aldenhams Parish Council (APC) is a statutory consultee. When APC examines applications, our responses are sent to Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC) for consideration. HBC is not obligated to accept our responses, but our comments and observations draw attention to important local issues and assists HBC's understanding of the views of residents and the Radlett Neighbourhood Plan.

The contentious applications include the Solar Farm application which, together with others, we challenged. It was refused, appealed, and finally dismissed by the Secretary of State in April 2024.

Then there was the Shenley Hill residential development application, bordered by Shenley Hill and Theobald Street. Another one that has been appealed twice, and is awaiting a review of the final reasons for refusal by the Inspector, by the Secretary of State.

Not forgetting the huge (biggest in the world!) application for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Letchmore Heath. This is for 400 container-sized units and associated safety installations. To-date, there have been 2628 objections from local residents; it has been objected to by APC, and many local organisations made applications against it.

Please keep an eye on APC's website and notice boards, as we will continue to update you all once a decision is reached.

A reminder: it would be very helpful to the planning committee if you send us a copy when you write comments to HBC regarding an application that concerns you. It will help us take into account your views ahead of evaluating the application when it comes to us.

All planning meetings are open to any resident who would like to attend. They are held on the first floor at The Radlett Centre, held usually on the first and third Monday of every month. The agendas and minutes are published on our website www.aldenham-pc.gov.uk

All of what we do would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of APC's officers, not forgetting the invaluable and knowledgeable Graham Taylor, our specialist co-opted member, and the committee members who spend considerable time in reviewing applications before the meetings.



Cllr Saleem Khawaja
Chair of Planning Committee

Radlett Neighbourhood Plan – Community Projects **Cycling & Footpaths Working Party**



This working party was set-up to try and implement some of the initiatives in the Getting Around section of the Radlett Neighbourhood Plan (RNP).

Hertfordshire County Council wishes to try and improve cycling and walking routes in the County through its 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans' programme. A member of that group will be invited to a meeting of this working party to discuss the routes identified in the RNP that would benefit from safe cycling lanes. One of those routes mentioned in the Plan is from Harper Lane to Radlett Station.

Meanwhile evidence is being gathered to show that footpath's A31 & A32 are regularly walked and joined together through an undesignated footpath. Hopefully, it might be possible that enough people can show that the route has been well used for many years and therefore should be adopted as a designated footpath in the future. If you do use these footpaths regularly then please contact the APC office who will then put you in touch with a member of the working party to discuss this further.

An article will be placed in the next Around Radlett explaining the difference between a footpath and a bridleway, as it appears that a lot of people do not know that you are only allowed to cycle on a bridleway and not on a footpath. It is hoped that pressure can be put on the Rights of Way team to provide better signage to explain which is which.

APC continues to talk with Hertsmeire County Council about bringing a bike scheme to Radlett. If and when this happens, location sites will be considered and proper docking spaces encouraged so that the bikes cannot be left anywhere when they are finished with and clutter the streets.



We will continue to update you on what is happening to improve our footpaths and cycle ways as and when there is more information.

Cllr Estelle Samuelson
Chair of RNP Cycling Projects

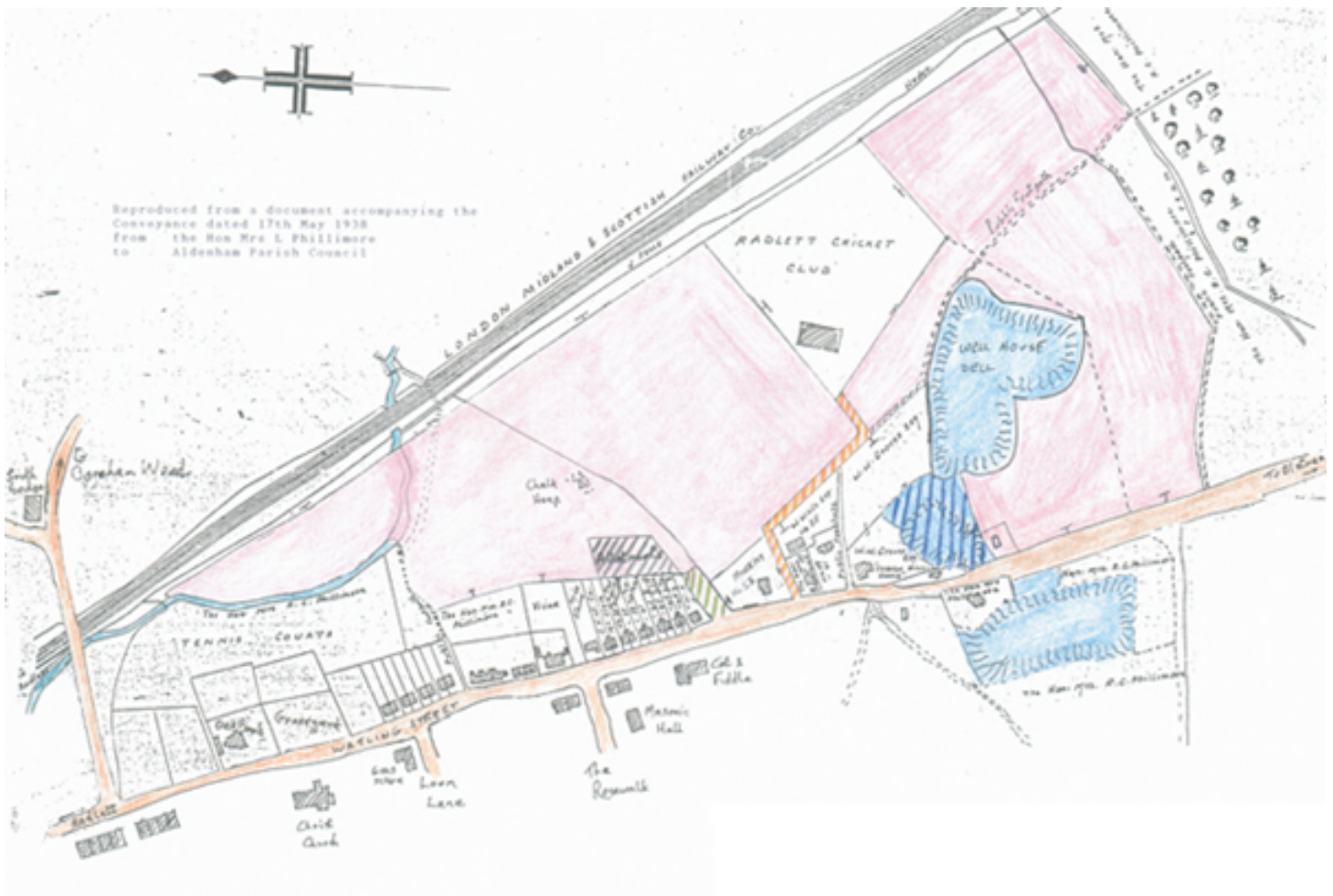


King Georges Field Radlett Trust



Aldenham Parish Council (APC) own a piece of land on the edge of Radlett along Cobden Hill. It is held under trust, called the King Georges Fields Radlett Trust, and was part of a number of playing fields that were held nationally as King George V Playing Fields. This was a way of protecting these playing fields from encroachment and possible development. The overall body is now called 'Fields in Trust'.

The King George V Playing Fields in Radlett (KGV) consists of some 50 acres over five fields coloured pink below, and two dells coloured blue on the map below.



These lie between the back of the houses in Watling Street and the railway line, south of the Tennis Club. Going south from the Tennis Club there is The Piggeries (an island of land between Tykes Water and the railway line), the Rose Field, the rugby club pitches that are rented to TabardRFC at a nominal rent, the car park, Wellhouse Dell, the Second XI cricket club pitch rented to RadlettCC at a nominal rent, the Picnic Field and Salters Field (the largest of all the fields). Over the road from Salters Field is Cobden Hill Dell.

The oasis in white is not owned by APC, this is owned by RadlettCC and is home to their First XI.



During the past year the King Georges Field Radlett Trust have

- Continued to support the local clubs that hire some of the fields
- Erected gates and fences around the Picnic Field to allow a relatively secure area for owners to train their dogs
- Installed a crossover from Watling Street/Cobden Hill onto Salters Field, making it easier to access parking for the Middlesex County Cricket games
- Regularly monitored the trees planted in 2022 in Salters Field
- Installed a seat at the top of Salters Field, so that visitors can enjoy the view

Finally, I would like to thank the Open Spaces team for working so hard to maintain the good standard of our KGV playing fields.



Cllr David Lambert
Chair of King Georges Field Radlett Trust



Finance & General Purposes Committee

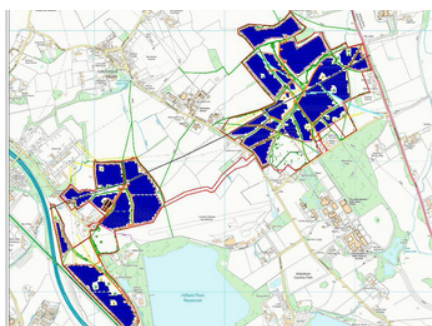


The Finance and General Purposes Committee's terms of reference include responsibility to Aldenhams Parish Council (APC) for: budgetary control, risk management, insurance, health and safety, the council's policies, management of the council's properties, reserves and all staff matters.

APC reserves on 1 April 2023 stood at £1,419,666 (2022: £1,470,994) of which £406,403 must be used only for capital projects. £143,252 has been earmarked for specific purposes such as Christmas Lights, trees & play equipment. We also held £667,562 (2022: £515,863), Community Infrastructure Receipts (CiL) received from Hertsmeire Borough Council for development in the parish (formerly Section 106 monies). With the exception of a small number of grants awarded to, Aldenhams War Memorial, Radlett Men's Club, Radlett Museum and the Radlett Centre Trust, the balance of CiL has been earmarked towards the Phillimore Recreation Café project. The remaining funds are held in a general reserve.



Our reserves are being used to fund a number of capital projects planned over the next few years to provide further community benefit. This year we have funded improvements to the children's play area at the Phillimore Recreation Ground. Whilst the Café Project will be funded from CiL, having healthy reserves has allowed us to commit to the project before a full 100% of the funding has been generated from our CiL receipts. We have also used our reserves to fund two big planning development fights against the Solar Farm and the land on Shenley Hill. Together these two planning appeals have reduced our reserves by £160,000. APC felt these were important battles to fight, as voiced by the thousands of objections each received. The Green Belt surrounding our villages is too precious not to fight to protect, and once gone is lost forever.



However, these unexpected planning fights have reduced our reserves to a level just adequate to run the council's day-to-day operations for three months. Our operations include acting as caretaker for 165 acres of land, maintaining and improving two parks, organising events such as the popular children's days at Phillimore Recreation Ground and the Winter Fair at the Radlett Centre. The Council also provides the winter lights each year, and grants the Radlett Centre £120,000 annually to ensure the survival of this excellent local resource.



To allow APC to rebuild up the necessary reserves that have allowed it to deal with contingencies and speculative planning applications, while also continuing its day-to-day operations, the precept for 2024/25 has been raised by 7.98% an additional £10 per household per year. APC have done all that it can to keep this as low as possible reflecting that for 2020/21 APC actually reduced the precept by 7.35% so the raise this year takes the precept close to its value in 2020.

Each year the Council strives to improve its services while at the same time offering value for money with greater efficiency. This is achieved through the hard work of a dedicated and experienced team. As always, we would like to thank Peter Evans (Council Manager) and Monika Duong (Deputy Council Manager) as well as their office colleagues and the Open Spaces team members for their continued hard work, commitment and professionalism.

Cllr John Graham
Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee



Aldenham Parish Council Accounts 2022-23



Aldenham Parish Council ('the Council') is required by statute to publish its annual accounts for the previous financial year.

These accounts are audited both internally by IAC Audit & Consultancy Ltd and externally by PFK Littlejohn LLP. These are the final audited accounts which were examined by them and there were no comments made.

Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2023

<u>2021-22</u>	<u>Income</u>		<u>2022-23</u>
636,934	Precept	<u>Note 1</u>	661,495
4,832	Bank interest	<u>Note 2</u>	17,609
9,558	Grants	<u>Note 3</u>	16,700
9,776	Fees charged by Council	<u>Note 4</u>	10,067
-	Sale of Assets	<u>Note 5</u>	5,592
1,371	Miscellaneous		1,521
170,601	Community Infrastructure Levy	<u>Note 6</u>	172,616
<u>833,072</u>	Total Income		<u>885,600</u>
<u>2021-22</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>		<u>2022-23</u>
205,328	Council Administration	<u>Note 7</u>	249,258
159,966	Maintenance of Open Spaces	<u>Note 8</u>	212,174
137,495	Grant and contribution to Radlett Centre costs	<u>Note 9</u>	138,555
58,200	Community Events and interaction	<u>Note 10</u>	49,285
20,676	Grants awarded by the Council to outside bodies	<u>Note 3</u>	25,032
19,819	Earmarked Reserve Projects	<u>Note 11</u>	122,324
28,549	Community Infrastructure Levy spending	<u>Note 6</u>	18,107
-	Capital funds spending	<u>Note 12</u>	22,193
100,000	Long Term Investments	<u>Note 13</u>	100,000
<u>730,033</u>	Total Expenditure		<u>936,928</u>
1,367,955	Funds balance represented by:		
	Balance brought forward as at 1st April 2022		1,470,994
103,039	Excess of income over expenditure for the year		—
	Excess of expenditure over income for the year		<u>51,328</u>
<u>1,470,994</u>	Balance C/F as at 31st March 2023		<u>1,419,666</u>

The reserves currently held by the Council are comprised as follows;



	£
General Reserves	202,450
Earmarked Reserves (for certain Council projects)	143,251
Capital Reserves (which can only be used on capital projects)	406,403
Community Infrastructure Funds	667,562
Total	1,419,666

Note 1 – Precept – This is the amount of your Council Tax that is allocated to Aldenham Parish Council.

Note 2 – Interest – This increased significantly in 2022-23 as interest rates increased and APC invested its surplus funds wisely.

Note 3 – Grants & Sponsorship – This includes monies received from Herts County Councillor C Clapper Locality Budget towards the new play equipment in Letchmore Heath Play Area and towards the Queens Jubilee celebration event in Watling Parade. There was also sponsorship from Debenhams Ottaway, Brass Monkeys and Beaver Travel for the Queens Jubilee events in KGV Playing Fields and Watling Parade. Monies was also received for the Queens Jubilee from the four Hertsmere Borough Councillors and they also contributed towards the Kings Coronation event in Phillimore Rec in May 2023.

APC subsidises Newberries Car Park so the first hour of use is free, and pays a grant to Citizens Advice Bureau so it could provide a weekly morning outreach service at the Radlett Centre.

APC also gave grants to Churches Together to provide sound at the Remembrance Day in Radlett and to TabardRFC for the annual firework display.

Note 4 – Fees charged by the Council -- Income derived from the hire of the allotments, leases with various local organisations which use APC land, stalls at the Winter Fair and the phone mast in Radlett Gardens.

Note 5 – Sale of Assets – During the year, APC traded in its 'ride on mower' for a newer model.

Note 6 – Community Infrastructure Levy – These are funds that are paid to Hertsmere Borough Council by developers and passed on to APC, as a condition of certain planning permissions granted.

Community Infrastructure Levy must be allocated to capital funding, APC have put some of these funds aside to help local community groups with capital projects that they have, as well as the funding of the proposed café in Phillimore Rec. In 2022/23 funds were allocated as follows;



- Architect and survey fees for the planning application for the proposed café in Phillimore Rec.
- Grant for new patio area at Radlett Guide Hut, allowing them to use the outside area for guide evenings.

Note 7 – Council Administration – These are the costs of managing the council offices at the Radlett Centre including accounts and general management.

Note 8 – Maintenance of Open Spaces -- These are the costs of maintaining and improving the open spaces owned or leased by Aldenham Parish Council, including Phillimore Rec (the allotments, children's play area, main field and Fir Spring Wood), Scrubbits Wood, Tykeside and Radlett Gardens, KGV Playing Fields, Aldenham Green, Letchmore Heath (The Green, the pond and Children's Play area) and Pegmire Lane. This includes staffing, equipment maintenance, planting (including the hanging baskets on the High Street) and repairs.

Note 9 – Grant and contribution to Radlett Centre costs – This year APC continued to fund the centre as well as repairs to the car park.

Note 10 – Community Events and Interaction -- all costs associated with engaging with the community such as website, administration and Around Radlett. Also, events such as Summer Activities and the Winter Fair/Christmas Lights switch on.

Note 11 – Earmarked Reserves Spending – These are funds built over the years for certain projects. In 2022/23 this included, purchase of new 'Ride on Mower', events, new trees in Phillimore Rec and KGV Playing Fields, planning appeal for proposed Solar Panels installation on land in the parish.

Note 12 – Capital Reserves Spending – These are funds received from sale of assets such as land to the rear of the War Memorial in Radlett – These funds can only be spent on capital projects. In 2022-23 this was allocated towards the Phillimore Rec Improvements – Phase 2 Car Park – architect drawings and surveys, purchase of flail mower and a memorial bench for a long term staff member.

Note 13 – Long Term Investments – This is funds already held that have been placed in a medium risk investment with Rathbones.

Peter Evans
Council Manager & Responsible Financial Officer







NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE **ANNUAL PARISH (COMMUNITY) MEETING** WILL BE HELD ON **MONDAY 13TH MAY 2024 AT 8pm** IN THE DOUGLAS HICKS ROOM, THE RADLETT CENTRE, ALDENHAM AVENUE, RADLETT.

THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED AT THIS MEETING WILL BE:

- 1. Welcome by Chair of the Council.**
- 2. Apologies for absence.**
- 3. To receive, and if so resolved, confirm the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 29TH March 2023.**
- 4. Annual Reports –**
 - a) Chairs' Annual Report.**
 - b) King Georges Fields Radlett Trust**
 - c) Finance and General Purposes Committee.**
 - d) Planning Committee.**
 - e) Allotments Working Party.**
 - f) Access for All Working Party**
 - g) RNP – Community Projects – Cycling/Footpaths.**
 - h) Events Working Party**
- 5. To receive the Accounts and Reports from Charities and Organisations that have received grants from Aldenhams Parish Council during the year.**
- 6. To receive reports from other Charities and Organisations within the Parish.**
- 7. To receive questions from electors.**

Councillor Helen Jones
Chairman Aldenhams Parish Council

All residents of Aldenhams, Radlett, High Cross, Letchmore Heath and Round Bush only are encouraged/able to attend.

The meeting will finish at or before 9:30pm. We wish to make this event accessible to all. If you have any particular requirements, please get in touch with Peter Evans or Monika Duong on 01923856433 who will do their best to help you.