

Alderton Parish Council

Email: aldertonpc@gmail.com www.Aldertonparishcouncil.org.uk

Minutes of the Annual Alderton's Parish Meeting 2024

held at Alderton Village Hall on Tuesday, 7 May 2024 commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: M. Davies (Chair), J Kettle, N Broderick, M West, P Woodman, D Rayton

Attendance: Parish Clerk, County Cllr D. Gray, Borough Cllr G. Madle, 34 members of the public

1. Introduction by Chair

Chairman welcomed everyone for attending.

2. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received

3. Chairman's address

Cllr Davies gave a summary of year and spoke about creating a future community plan for spending the CIL money. There is currently a vacancy for a Parish councillor and encouraged residents to consider.

Cllr Broderick gave a summary of latest planning developments. See full report in Appendix A

3. Report from Borough Council and County Council

Borough Cllr Madle gave a report from Tewkesbury Borough Council and Cllr Gray gave a report from Gloucestershire County Council, both reports included in Appendix B.

4. Written reports received from local groups and organisations in Appendix C.

Alderton Village Hall	Oak Hill School
Alderton Acorns Preschool & Toddlers Group	Church Wardens Report
Bell Ringers	Alderton Gardening Club
Alderton Allotment Association	Greenfield Trust
Gardeners Arms	Alderton Village Store
Alderton Resident Golf Society	

5. Any other business - An opportunity for residents to raise any matters of parish interest

- Resident asked if the Parish Council had any update on the second stage of development of the Charles Church site on the Beckford Road. Cllr Broderick reported that the parish council had yet to receive any formal application.
- Resident asked why there will be a 2-3 year gap between the SLP and the next one. Cllr Broderick explained multiple reasons for this.
- Resident asked if it was worth engaging with the consultation for the development of land east of St Margarets Drive. Residents were encourage to engage with any consultation and to provide feedback as it should help shape the layout, materials and landscaping for the submission of detailed plans.
- Resident asked about the future of the village shop what happens if it doesn't sell and if there were plans for a future new shop location. Parish confirmed that there is no plans for a new village shop. The Parish Council will be engaging in a consultation process with the village in the upcoming year to ascertain the requirements and priorities of the village.
- Resident requested that any future football clubs using the playing field be mindful of the parking in the area and leaving rubbish in the field.

Chairman closed the meeting at 20.10PM.

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APPENDIX A

Message from Alderton Parish Council Current Chair – Cllr Martin Davies

Firstly I ought to say that we now operate a system of alternating Chairs with all of us taking a turn for a few meetings. So it just so happens that it is me at the moment. We think that this has been successful and a good means of encouraging us all to take responsibility for our range of responsibilities. Also we have divided up lead roles so Nicki and Mike take the lead on Planning, myself and John Kettle lead on the Playground and Playing Field and Paul and Dennis for the Allotments.

The year has once more been dominated by planning and a series of unwelcome outcomes but Nicki will give a separate report on this. We have some hope that a new Strategic Local Plan will provide some relief but that is a number of years away.

One of the consequences of development is that we do receive some money from Developers. This falls under two categories. The first called Section 106 is providing money for some playground improvements. We are using this to fence off the playground to provide extra security. We may also have the funds to provide some extra equipment.

The second source of funds is called Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL] and we have about £100K in the bank [a savings account] already. Development south of St Margaret's Drive and west of Willow Bank Road may provide several hundred more £K [to be confirmed] once development has started. We intend to draw up some options for using this money and will consult with residents about its use.

One of the possible uses is on improvements to the village hall and we are funding a study into this. The study will cover changes to the existing building but also, although perhaps less feasible, the option of a new building on a green field site.

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the Playground and also the Playing Field and Changing Room. We much regret the demise of Alderton FC during the course of the year but have welcomed a team from Tewkesbury and supported junior football from a team organised from Ashton. We have just heard that Tewkesbury will not be using our pitch next year so we have some capacity available for another team. The Playgroup continues to be well used and we have a team of volunteers who regularly check on the state of the equipment.

The Parish Council is also responsible for the allotments and we currently have about 80 plots on land owned by the County Council and land we own ourselves. We have a good relationship with the local Allotment Association and have sought to work with plot holders to provide suitably sized plots at a reasonable rent with a watchful eye on the need to maintain a productive and tidy site. Occupancy is high but there is always some turnover and new residents are encouraged to register for a plot.

Both these activities involve a programme of repairs and maintenance which range from catching moles on the Playing Field to providing standby water pipes on the allotments.

Events during the year include:

A shared concern about flooding. One Parish Councillor, Paul, cleared the ditch next to the Playing Field, to alleviate flooding on Beckford Road. We have asked our County Councillor and Highways to investigate further the perpetual problem on Willow Bank Road and wait to

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hear from them. We are pursuing the case of overflowing manholes on Blacksmiths Road and by the school.

New standard contracts for allotment holders have been issued to make the responsibilities of the Parish Council and plot holders clearer.

There is an improvement programme for benches with repair and replacement in progress.

We have registered with Tewkesbury Borough Council what are called non heritage assets. These are assets worth preserving but which do not have listed status. These so far are Lower Farm, a milestone on the B road and two WW2 pillboxes and an ammunition store.

There is a project to restore the old village shop, on the Allotment site, so that it can be available for community use, particularly for young people, to promote interest in allotment activities and the environment.

We have made various interventions to preserve our network of footpaths.

We liaise or try to with Highways about roadway and footpath issues in the Parish.

Nicki will cover challenges in the year caused by planning proposals. These have occupied a huge amount of our time.

We meet each month and welcome our District Councillors and County Councillor to meetings to give us a broader perspective of events in the area. Residents are welcome to observe our meetings [although this might mean 3 to 4 hours] or to raise issues. We look to publicise main issues under discussion every month in the village newsletter.

We have for the past year had our new Parish Clerk, Cathie, and we thank her for her dedicated and enthusiastic support. Cathie has revitalised our website which now contains a much broader range of documents available to view. Cathie can be contacted by e mail.

We hope that the information available this evening both earlier and in the Annual Report are of help and we particularly welcome engagement from new residents.

Planning Update – Cllr Nicola Broderick

Once again this year has been a busy one on the Planning Front for the Parish Council and the village.

Whilst Tewkesbury Borough Council finally had their Local Plan approved summer 2022, a number of appeal decisions regarding housing schemes across the Borough received approval given that the Joint Core Strategy for Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester City Councils was out of date and the joint Boroughs could no longer demonstrate a required Five Year housing Land supply across the three Authorities.

As such , until a new Strategic Local Plan is in place, identifying the current housing need requirements for the Borough we will continue to be challenged on sites with the need for housing.

An initial issues and options consultation took place in December/January time which set out the Joint councils various options for the spatial spread for the required housing within the three Authorities over the next 20/30 years. The Parish Council submitted strong consultation responses seeking to restrict future housing schemes in and around villages such as Alderton.

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We await the Councils further considerations on the evolving spatial strategy for housing which is anticipated earlier next year. Unfortunately the creation of the new Strategic Local Plan will be some years away.

Current site updates

47 unit scheme on land to the rear of St Margarets Drive – application ref 22/00624/OUT .

Following the Public Inquiry where Alderton Parish Council were a party to the proceedings – the appeal was allowed in June 2023 for outline permission.

Whilst some archaeological trenching work took place on the site late summer we have only recently been approached by the intended developers of the site, Freeman Homes, who are currently working up more formalized plans for the site which they intend to undertake formal village consultations on in the next couple of months. Currently their intention is to submit the reserved matters details concurrently with all necessary conditions discharge information – with a view to having full detailed approval by the end of the year – thus looking at a start date on site early in 2025.

As and when we receive further information we will keep Alderton residents updated.

Land rear of 52-74 Willow Bank Road for 48 dwellings – LPA ref 22/00998/FUL

Full planning permission for this scheme was granted in principle at the Tewkesbury Planning Committee (November 2023) and the Decision Notice finally issued 23rd Feb 2024 following completion of the Section 106 Agreement.

There are a number of pre commencement planning conditions attached to the planning permission which require submissions to be made to the Tewkesbury Council and approval granted before a start can be made on site. Once again – as no details have been submitted to date – it is anticipated that the very earliest date for commencement on site would be in the autumn. Once again we will update the village as and when we hear more.

26 unit rural exceptions housing site – Dibden Lane – 23/00204/FUL

This application remains outstanding despite over 100 letters of objection from residents and several concerns expressed by statutory consultees to the proposals.

We met the Highway Authority representative on site late last year – in order to explain our deep concerns on Highway safety issues – and the likely need for extensive removal of hedging generating significant landscape impact issues. The Parish Council followed this up by engaging an independent Highway Consultant to review the scheme and put forward robust technical reasons why this scheme should not go ahead. We await the response of the Council, but continue to closely monitor any activity with regards to this application.

Land Adj. 22 St Margarets Road – one dwelling house – 23/00720/FUL

Following the submission of this application in July 2023 – the Parish Council has raised a number of concerns- alongside residents objections . A recently submitted revised set of plans are currently being assessed with a view to further comments being made in due course.

Cala 2 Scheme – Willow Bank Road

This development finished by the end of 2023. It is noted that a number of trees planted in the landscape scheme have failed and the Parish Council will chase Tewkesbury and the developers to ensure their replacement as required under their planning conditions.

Residential Development for up to 9 Houses – land west of Willow Bank Road – 23/01148/PIP

This application for determining the principle of housing on the horse grazing field close to the junction of Willow Bank Road with the B4077 was refused in January 2024 following representations made by the Parish Council due to the significant intrusion into the rural

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landscape, the detached nature of the site and its unduly harmful encroachment into the countryside.

So some schemes we do win !! and the Parish Council will continue to uphold the concerns of the village to the best of our ability.

APPENDIX B

Tewkesbury Borough Councillors Report 2023-24

This year your Borough Councillors have been hard at work both representing you at Council meetings and committees and responding to your concerns. You are lucky enough to have three of us to choose from and this is what we've been up to!

Early in the year we passed a motion at Council to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency in the Borough, the outworking of this has been that TBC has appointed a Climate Change Reduction Programme Officer and Caring for the Environment has been made one of our three priorities in the new Council plan to be adopted at our May 2024 meeting. Environmental impacts or concerns are frequently raised at Planning Committee by Councillors, are central to the development of the Strategic Local Plan and Garden Town Charter and TBC's own offices have had an Air Source Heat Pump installed this winter.

We're also trying to improve the transparency of the Council & Councillor's activities and with that in mind webcasting of Council meetings was approved last year and set to be in place in July 2024. Locally we've tried to be relatively active on social media, sharing information about Council meetings and decisions and held our first drop-in surgery in Winchcombe on 27th April. Something we intend to repeat on a regular basis and hopefully in other areas of the Ward as well.

There have been some challenges in the area of Planning this last year when the Council's housing land supply figures were successfully challenged and the Council had to re-evaluate its figure, leaving us short of the required 5 years. However, although this has resulted in some difficult decisions all round in recent months, recent performance data and monitoring is showing improvement and we hope to see more significant improvements in the year ahead. We continue to work hard to advocate for our ward areas where we are able and recognise the impact recent planning decisions have had and where residents have suffered disproportionately in some areas. The consultation with residents and parish/town Councils on the new Strategic Local Plan will feed into its development and subsequent negotiations with Gloucester and Cheltenham Councils.

Key work has been going on within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to improve the accountability and ongoing monitoring of the Council and its services, and the creation of a new Council Plan means that there is an opportunity to create more measurable and impactful KPIs.

Young people have been a key focus of the new Council's activities, a Youth Advisory Board is being set up for the Garden Communities Programme, finance for a new post of Youth Engagement Officer has been approved in the budget, proactive engagement with 16-18 year olds in local schools as part of the Council plan consultation and motions have been passed to promote fostering, increase the upper age limit for which Care leavers are entitled to Council Tax discount and more recently to refer to Gloucestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee the disparity in funding for Children's Hospices for further investigation.

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On a more local level we've responded to concerns about planning issues, environmental health & noise, anti-social behaviour and highways/rights of way.

It's been a privilege to serve as your Ward Councillors this year and we look forward to another year representing you, thank you for giving us the opportunity.

Cllrs Gemma Madle, Jim Mason, David Gray

Gloucestershire County Council - Winchcombe and Woodmancote Division

This has been my third year in post on the County Council.

In addition to my responsibilities as a local division member, as a cabinet member responsible for Environment and Planning on the County Council I also oversee a number of the important areas for which the Council has responsibility.

In the Division

This has been a year of significant progress in the division, with a number of important local infrastructure projects delivered. Highlights include:

- Resurfacing of the Gretton Road
- Resurfacing of the Greet Road, from North Street to the Black Sheds junction • Repairing of the collapsed Isbourne riverside embankment in Winchcombe, saving the footpath
- Securing a major grant to support the community purchase of the Winchcombe Methodist Hall
- Resurfacing at Teddington Hands roundabout

Whilst there has been big progress on the the worst of the local roads, and more has been done on various others, 24/25 should see even further progress as the Council's commitment of significant funding, and the national government's diversion of funding from HS2 to local roads, will continue to pay dividends. The Broadway Road is a major target for improvement going forward.

It should be remembered that all major resurfacing inevitably comes with some level of short term disruption. However, construction disruption on local roads is more commonly caused by utility works, which are outside the direct control of the Highways Authority. Best efforts have been made to organise this necessary work such that there continues to be "through routes" open at all times and actual closures are limited to off-peak times, where possible.

Reflecting the focus on the issues of potholes, the Council has introduced an enhanced web based application that makes reporting them easier, hopefully speeding up the delivery of solutions. FixMyStreet can be accessed from the County Council website or by simply searching for "Gloucestershire fix my street" in any web browser.

In some instances temporary fills may be used pending more substantial schemes, such as full resurfacing.

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The same application can be used to report blocked or damaged road signs and flooding issues that affect the highways, such as blocked gullies.

The strong finances of the Council have allowed it to extend the “build back better” and “youth” councillor schemes, both of which provide small amounts of discretionary funding to local councillors, and I have used this funding to support a number of local causes, including sports and community events and WAM youth group.

County Council

At a County level the Council continues to be financially prudent in how it runs its activities and will run a small surplus for the year just ended, despite the significant increase in funding required by a number of the services that the County is responsible for, such as Children’s and Adult Social Care.

The County ends the year in a secure financial position having avoided many of the mistakes made in other “more ambitious” councils across the country.

On the capital front Gloucestershire continues to attract national funding to support an ambitious program of investments, not least in my areas that fall within my portfolio. Highlights include:

- new road schemes, such as the changes on the A417 to address the “missing link”, planned improvements to junction 10 on the M5, the upgrade of the new Arle Court “park and ride” facility, which will open shortly, and the development of proposals for a new junction 9 to relieve congestion at the existing junction and on the A46 and support Tewkesbury’s ambitions for Garden Communities
- rapid progress on the implementation of the County’s ambitious plans to construct a 26 mile segregated “cycle spine”, together with additional local connections, with the stretch Bishops Cleeve to Cheltenham due to commence construction in 2024
- the refurbishment of the Wingmoor Farm Household Recycling Centre, improving amenity and enhancing operational effectiveness of the site
- the Javelin Park “energy from waste” plant has operated smoothly and generated a significant financial surplus for the County, as well as all but eliminating the use of landfill
- good progress on our plans to help address climate change, with rapid progress on our program to plant 1 million trees across the county and the first of 1,000 public e-charging points being installed

The Council approved a budget for 24/25 that included an uplift in the base council tax of 2.99% for next year, together with a nationally mandated additional 2% Adult Social care, for a year on year total increase of 4.99%. That rise is well below the rate at which both pensions and wages are rising, but is nonetheless an uncomfortable necessity given the growing demand for social care services in particular and the underlying pressures on costs, not least due to rising wages across all services. The national minimum wage, has for example, risen by 9.8% from 1 April 2024.

As noted last year, Gloucestershire is an ambitious county with exciting plans to improve our connectivity and address climate change. It should be recognised that much of the work done in these areas has actually been funded from grants won in competition with other authorities, not least thanks to our record on delivering schemes. The 26 mile cycle spine, the construction of which has progressed rapidly in the last 12 months, is, for example,

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almost wholly funded from Active Travel and other grant funding from central government, rather than out of the local council tax. Consequently, not building the cycle spine would not provide Gloucestershire with additional funding for other activities, but simply result in a cycle scheme being delivered elsewhere in the country.

It is a privilege to be your county councillor. I encourage parishes and residents to get in touch if they have any ideas or issues that they wish to discuss or which they believe I might be able to help with. My contact details are available on the GCC site.

David Gray

APPENDIX C

Alderton Village Hall

The Village Hall is currently very well used by a variety of village organisations and other groups. There are regular bookings for the Alderton pre-school, Gardening Club, Parish Council, and yoga, together with ad-hoc bookings for private parties and polling station use.

The hall is the perfect venue for fund-raising events organised not only by the Village Hall Social Committee but also by other village groups such as the Pre-school and the Church, and as such provides an important facility to support other groups in the village.

The Village Hall Social Committee hold monthly coffee mornings, which provide a friendly place for people to get together socially, whilst enjoying home-made cakes and other refreshments; the main event organised during the last year was the New Year's Eve party, which was a sell-out and a very enjoyable evening for all who attended.

There was also a Flower and Produce Show, which is always a great community event.

If anyone is keen to start a club or society that they think villagers would be interested in joining, it would be great to hear from you.

Our plans to refurbish and improve the facility that we have are ongoing, and we have been supported by the Parish Council in our efforts to get plans underway.

We are aiming to hold a public consultation about these plans later in the year, and will welcome feedback from the community.

We want the hall to continue to provide a valuable community facility for years to come, and to be a facility that many people in the village want to make use of.

Obviously the fundraising and redevelopment projects, together with the day-to-day maintenance of the hall, need enthusiastic volunteers to make them happen and we would welcome anyone who has ideas about refurbishment, social events, or other activities to join the committee to help us ensure that we continue to provide a well-used amenity.

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Oak Hill C of E Primary School

We have had a number of wonderful and very successful events in the spring term. We held our first Easter fair, it was wonderful to welcome members of the Alderton community to our school. We had a fantastic raffle, stalls organised and ran by the year 5 and 6 children and games for everyone to enjoy. The event raised over £1000 which is being spent on high quality and diverse books for the children to enjoy.

We had 6 representatives from Oak Hill at the Primary Quest Oracy competition, the children spoke with confidence and passion about a range of different topics. Our year 2 representative was named the year group winner at the event.

The school welcomed a former teacher who has dedicated his time in retirement to fostering children's love of Maths, to provide a geometry puzzle day. Children and staff had the opportunity to show perseverance and solve a number of fantastic puzzles.

Last week, saw the completion of the trim trail installation outside the front of school, there are further plans to improve the outdoor space and lunchtime provision for the children.

Upcoming Events:

Nature inn Art whole school trip 8th May, a celebration and appreciation of art and nature. We have a further whole school trip to the Science Festival in Cheltenham in June.

The Summer production (title yet to be released) will be a main focus for the children in year 5 and 6, although this will be a whole school effort. We will welcome out new reception parents and children as well as Alderton Acorns to our dress rehearsal in July.

We will be holding sports day on the 12 th July followed by an Olympic themed fair organised by FOOHs.

We can confirm the closure of the Dumbleton site has now been finalised (on 25 March 2024) and the land return to the original freeholders.

We are continuing to work towards completion of our conversion to become an academy when we will become part of the Primary Quest family of small rural Gloucestershire primary schools.

Headteacher Mr Greaves will not be in school for the foreseeable future. Miss Attwood has stepped up to the role of Acting Headteacher in his absence with the support of the Board of Governors and our colleagues at Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester Diocese and Primary Quest.

Alderton Acorns Preschool and Toddler Group: Nurturing Growth, Building Community

As we reflect on the past year at the Alderton Acorns Preschool and Toddler Group, we are proud to report that our preschool has retained its valued 'Good' rating following a recent Ofsted inspection. This accomplishment is reflective of the commitment and hard work of the Acorns team, the support of our families, and of the committee both past and present.

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Transitioning into 2024 saw a new committee taking on the role previously led by the outgoing Chair, Sian Tryner. We are very grateful for her time, commitment, and the support that she has given to the Preschool. As part of the new committee's commitment to support the preschool we are introducing a new accounting software system to help provide more efficiencies for parents and the preschool.

As a charity, fundraising forms an integral part of the activities of the committee to ensure we can meet our financial commitments. Last year saw the committee and Acorns team involved in fundraising at the Alderton 5K, creating a Christmas Wonderland, and for the new committee this year; its first fundraising event of the year, a hugely successful Curry and Quiz night. The village came together in a spirit of friendship and generosity, helping to raise an impressive £1635.00. These funds will play a vital role in supporting the preschool and toddler group going forward.

In other exciting news, our preschool play leader is expecting, and we are in the process of recruiting for her maternity cover.

Following a successful intake of our older Acorns into Oak Hill Junior School last September, we have experienced lower numbers of children so far this year. We are eager to expand our preschool group and extend a warm invitation to prospective parents and carers to experience firsthand the fun and caring environment we offer. For more information, please take a leaflet from the village hall, visit our website: www.aldertonacorns.org.uk or email aldertonacorns@gmail.com

Meanwhile, our Toddler Group continues to grow, welcoming new members and fostering connections among parents and children alike. The dedication of the team who run Toddlers and the enthusiasm of our families make it a nurturing and welcoming place to be.

Chair, Alderton Acorns Preschool and Toddler Group

Church Wardens Report

The year really kicked off with the visit by Rachel, the Bishop of Gloucester, on January 22. Around 70 people attended, nearly all from Alderton. Lovely refreshments afterwards. The Bishop was suitably impressed. Thanks to all who helped in any way.

On the Easter Monday, April 10, the Tea and Prosecco event raised just over £580-00. The event was a sell-out, and feedback was especially good. It was a great chance to meet up with friends. Many thanks to Sarah Hughes for organising this. Thanks also to Helen West, Carol Williams, Pat Roe and Jane Hamilton for making mouth-watering cakes and savouries, and for doing the really hard work on the day.

Thanks also to Sheila Reid and Gill Cogzell for donating delicious cakes, to Rose Martyn for donating homemade jams for the scones, to Ivona for her generous donation towards the Prosecco and clotted cream, to Kim Greaves for donating macarons, and to Nigel Hamilton, Mike West and Will Hughes for setting out the tables, serving Prosecco, and (worst job of all) washing up. Nor must we forget our Reverend Julia who, as always, was generous in both buying tickets and giving donations. Finally, thanks to the villagers who bought tickets and supported us.

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The Mowing Season proved a war of attrition, after the wettest March for 42 years. Thanks as always to Mike West for organising the schedule, and to Dave Johnson for servicing the mowers and strimmer. There has then a slight problem with the mulching mower - rust. It is best if the mower is cleaned after each session. Rust builds up from the residue of grass cuttings around the blades and metal housing. The mower should not be used when the grass is very long or wet.

Despite the weather, the Conservation Area came good, and has been photographed and included in the pamphlet that goes with the Archdeacons' Visitations. Many thanks to Phil and Ros for maintaining this area. It is a quiet space for native wildflowers and wildlife to thrive in the midst of a busy village. And some of the plants have spread outside of the Conservation area. Primroses and cowslips now occur in many parts to the south of the Church, and if allowed to seed, will continue to spread.

The Fire Extinguishers were tested on September 19 by A&E Fire and Security. One new CO2 KG Horn supplied new. All left in good working order. Thank you, Joy, for arranging the visit.

The bi-annual testing of the bells was carried out by Taylors on Tuesday October 31. Thank you, Paul.

The lightning conductor was checked earlier in the year (May) by Dawsons Steeplejacks, unknown to us.

To commemorate Remembrance Sunday, we commissioned Eddie Alvis to make us a metal soldier, full sized. This attracted much attention at the War memorial, and spent November outside in the Churchyard. It now resides safely indoors, along with the mowers. Thank you, Sheila, for arranging this. And thanks to Eddie for such a fine piece of craftsmanship.

And ending on a high note, the Art Exhibition and Flower Festival, held in the Village hall and the Church on July 29 made £1,718.17 after expenses. Thanks to Tania and Emma Mills for heading up this with the theme of Alice in Wonderland. The Gift Day made £1,541.55 making a grand total to the PCC of £3,259.72. And the Christmas Fayre raised £2,735.90, with the admirable John Williams as Santa.

Michael Newman, Churchwarden

Bell Ringers

Our band consists of 11 ringers, although not all are fully active at the moment. We are lucky to have occasional visitors who are a great help and support at our practice nights. During the summer we rang for the Coronation at both of our churches (with help mainly from Gloucester & Bristol Guild of Church Bell Ringers, Cheltenham Branch, we were able to ring simultaneously at Alderton St Margaret's church and Dumbleton St Peter's Church) Alderton was also the host tower for the Cheltenham Branch of the Gloucester & Bristol Guild of Church Bellringers Striking competition. We entered a team for the first time in many years just for the experience.

Over the last 3 months Paul, our Tower Captain, has been teaching the 14 year old granddaughter of one of our ringers the basics of bell handling as part of the Duke of

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Edinburgh's award scheme. She is making excellent progress and hopefully she will soon be ringing rounds. We also had two local weddings during the year at Alderton.

Alderton Gardening Club

As chairman of the Alderton Gardening Club I am happy to report of another successful 12 months for our group. A year in which we cemented our recovery from the pandemic and it's implications for our meetings, and also a year when our membership numbers broke through the 100 barrier for the first ever time. A quarter of our membership now comes from outside of the parish with members now in Beckford, Dumbleton, Northway and Gretton.

During the last year we have held 12 meetings with a guest speaker at each one. Attendances have still not reached their pre-covid highs, but they are now not far off. It is felt that an average attendance of 50 is a good "ball park figure" to be able to break even with, and to give us a chance of making a profit. The monthly raffle is another source of income and very often delivers our profit for the evening. Once again we have had some high quality speakers visit us, with the highlight being an appearance from Chris Beardshaw the celebrated horticulturalist and garden designer who attended our September meeting. This was an all ticket sell out and was an occasion that will live long in our memories. Chris was with us for almost four hours and had time for everyone. 2024 promises more of the same with a visit of the nationally known horticulturalist Christine Walkden. She will be joining us for our June 13th meeting with a talk titled "The life and times of a gardener" Over half of the tickets have already been sold.

On the outings side of things the club ran an enjoyably successful trip to RHS Wisley in June and given our strong financial balance sheet we were able to part subsidise the travel costs for this. A couple more outings have been scheduled in 2024.

We have also benefited from our continued good relationship with Vale Gardens Ltd Of Badsey who have kindly given us substantial discounts on bulk loads of bagged compost along with seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots. Thanks as ever to managing director Keith Wright and his son Craig for their valued support.

We have again promoted the club extensively via social media with a page and a group on Facebook. The latter has 162 members, in such far away places as Newport, Glasgow, Somerset and even Finland ! . The Village's own WhatsApp group and newsletter are also used, along with more traditional posters to spread the news about our activities.

During last year's AGM a request for a member's monthly newsletter was proposed. I am pleased to say that this was taken on board and actioned by our membership secretary David Ruscoe and now goes out via email to current members a few days before our monthly meeting. It features a report on our last gathering, a preview of the next, some members photographs, articles about Alderton history and gardening jobs and tips for the month.

Life membership was awarded at our Christmas 2023 meeting and party to gardening guru Reg Moule, in recognition of the help, support and advice he given to us. He was our launch speaker at our first meeting in April 2018.

I would like to thank all of my fellow committee members for all of their hard work and commitment to our cause over the last 12 months. They are a great group of colleagues to work with, and bring so many skills, & talents to their individual roles. The club would simply

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not be viable without their efforts. Also a big thankyou to our members, our many visitors at the meetings and the array of superb speakers who have entertained us during the last year.

At the time of writing our membership numbers are higher than this comparative time of last year, with new people still joining the club for the first time.. With healthy finances, and a stellar cast of yet more high quality speakers appearing this next year, we remain the largest members based club in the village of Alderton.

As a committee we will always strive to preserve healthy funds in the Club's coffers as a contingency, but equally we will always aim to give back as many benefits to our members whenever prudently possible to do so.

Tom Cullimore, Chairman

Alderton Allotment Association

The Allotment Association exists to act in the best interests of the allotments site and all the plot holders, who automatically become members when they take on a tenancy. We are a constituted association with an elected Committee. We manage group activities connected with overall site maintenance, arrange insurance for communal equipment and plot holder liability, organise social events on site for members and work very closely with the Parish Council who are our landlords.

Over the past year the AAA and APC have worked together to tidy up the whole site and dispose of any debris. We have jointly undertaken maintenance of the tracks where potholes required filling and tackled clearance of the western boundary (bordering the eastern ends of Franklin Road and Shakespeare Close) where hedges were impinging on adjoining residential properties.

Last year the Parish Council kindly gave us custodianship of the old orchard area inside the main gate. We have pruned the fruit trees and increased the tree stock. This area is now available for all at the allotments to enjoy.

We have a close association with the Greenfields Trust, who administer community grants that are available from Gretton Solar Farm. Their funding has helped us construct purpose-built bays for the storage of wood chippings and manure. Most recently we have acquired additional water butts and watering cans which are being distributed amongst plot holders.

Last summer we trialled a Produce Stall (well a bench really!) on the orchard area. Members donated surplus produce and everyone in the village was encouraged to come and help themselves. It was a great success and will be repeated this year, this time with a properly constructed stall.

We will be encouraging everyone in again on Saturday 17 August, when we will hold an Open Day to coincide with National Allotments Week. It will be an opportunity for anyone who wants to know more to see what is going on, and what having an allotment entails.

We continue to work with the Parish Council on projects including boundary maintenance, expansion of the water supply across the site and the installation of a composting loo.

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There are still vacant plots and both parties will encourage the take-up of these. We are delighted that new residents in the village are arriving on site and playing an active part in the allotments' future.

Nick Andrews, Chairman

Green Fields Trust

Green Fields Trust is an association 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. We are not constituted as a charity but as an unincorporated association. We maintain visibility and accountability via the website where the grant process and application form may be downloaded. The owners of Gretton Solar Farm Limited are Bluefield Solar Income Fund, who acquired the Solar Farm asset from the previous owners, CTF on 20th January 2020.

With this funding, Green Fields Trust has continued to fund projects in the community in Alderton and Gretton. In the last year to March 2024 we were able to make grants to:

- **Alderton Allotment Association** - Communal bays for compost and farmyard manure
- **Gretton Primary School** - Solar battery system
- **Alderton Allotment Association** - Additional water butts and replacement watering cans
- ***** Alderton Village Hall** - Application for replacement 'eco' hand dryers received and awaiting decision ***

There are opportunities to apply for funding every six months on 31 March and 30 September. Alderton continues to be active in identifying opportunities - thank you!

During the COVID pandemic, funds started to build, enabling us to build up reserves. This created scope for funding the large Gretton Primary School solar project. Funding criteria (mostly with a renewable theme), application forms and more information about the Trust can be found at www.greenfieldstrust.co.uk. We welcome all applications within the scope of the funding criteria but we are really hoping for imaginative, larger projects to come along which really make a mark. This may require restraint in smaller grant applications especially where they are more in the nature of replacement and renewal.

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 operates with a degree of informality whilst maintaining accountability via the website. Please contact the trustees at greenfieldstrust2015@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out.

Kenneth Roles, on behalf of the trustees

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The Gardeners Arms

What a difference a year makes!

On the back of austerity cuts, rampant price increases, continued changing habits, we have seen an improvement to our sales and profitability. Primarily, this is on the back of staff cuts (in particular chefs) an easier menu to cope with, support from the campsite and a close engagement with the village. We hope to continue improving facilities over the next 12 months to both the fabric of the building and accommodation. We would like to thank the village for their continued support.

Mike, Wendy & Ella

Alderton Village Store

Unfortunately due to health problems during last couple of years, I had to close the shop few times, and sometime for a few days each month for my operation and hospital visits. Not being able to give a as good service as customers deserve, resulted in unhappy residents and customers, and therefor sadly the shop has lost some of its regular customers.

During my illness I realised, it is time to think about my retirement and I think the business needs fresh blood too. So as many of you are aware I would like to sell the business and aim for my retirement hopefully by early months of 2025. The sale of the Post Office is a bit more complicated than the shop itself. Specially Since "the Post Office Scandal", therefore it may take longer for the buyer to get training and the license from the Post Office, (any suggestions about the future of the shop and Post Office would be much appreciated).

I am going on holiday from 6th May 24 until 12th July 24. Sadly as I have no one to look after the shop, I have to close the shop and Post Office during my absence.

I like to thank everyone for being so kind and patient with me and specially thanks to Trisha Mills for looking after the shop so brilliantly.

Yari Aram

Alderton Residents Golf Society

To date we have 25 Members on a WhatsApp group. We generally play around 3 times a year playing various courses around the County, returning to the village pub for a pre ordered meal where we have a few drinks and a little presentation on the days results.

This is a very informal group of ladies and gents and would welcome any newcomers who are interested.