

Minutes of Bradfield Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 20th April 2026 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr. K. Dearing (Chair of Bradfield Parish Council),
17 parishioners,
Mrs. H. Pratt (Clerk).

Apologies: Apologies of absence were received from District Cllr. MacKinnon.

1. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th April 2025.

The minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Monday 7th April 2025 were agreed and will be signed by the Chair.

2. Matters arising from the minutes.

No matters were raised from the minutes of the 2025 Annual Parish Assembly.

3. Report from Bradfield Parish Council (Cllr. Dearing – Chair of Bradfield Parish Council).

Welcome to the Bradfield Parish Assembly 2026. This report covers the period April 2025 to March 2026. All submitted written reports will be available on the Parish Council website in due course.

Council Meetings

Your Parish Council continues to meet monthly on the first Monday of each month in the Village Hall; where that falls on a bank holiday, we meet instead at St Peter's on the Tuesday of that week. All parishioners are very welcome to attend and raise any concerns during the public forum at the beginning of each meeting.

Your Parish Councillors 2025–2026

I would like to thank all your Councillors for their time, energy and enthusiasm. It is sometimes overlooked that being a Councillor is an entirely voluntary role — we all give our free time to give back to our community. Your Councillors have been:

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|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Kimiko Dearing | Southend Road | Chair |
| Andrew House | Southend Road | Vice Chair |
| Giles Allen | Stanbrook Close | |
| Geoff Allnutt | The Laffords | |
| Rosemary Balsdon | Dark Lane | Pang Valley & Village Hall Rep |
| Kimberley Bishop | Admore Lane | |
| Steve O'Reilly | Heath Road | Planning |
| Tim Wale | Tutts Clump | |
| Bob Wyatt | Southend Road | Alms Houses Rep |

Bradfield Parish is fortunate that many residents take a great interest in what happens within the Parish and are prepared to get involved. We are always pleased to hear from members of the community, either at our meetings or by email.

Next year is an election year — if you are interested in joining us, please do get in touch.

Planning

This year the Parish Council considered 28 planning applications, in addition to a number of pre-application enquiries. Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in retrospective planning applications, where building work has already commenced without the required permission.

These applications have been split as follows:

| | |
|---|----|
| HOUSE (Householder applications) | 11 |
| FUL (Full planning applications) | 9 |
| LBC (Listed building consent) | 2 |
| AGRIC (Agricultural applications) | 1 |
| PACOU (Prior Approval – Change of Use) | 1 |
| CERTP (Certificate of Lawful Development) | 1 |
| Total | 28 |

The Council has been somewhat surprised by a number of decisions taken by West Berkshire Council, particularly in cases where our concerns — and those of neighbouring properties — appear to have been disregarded.

The Parish Council is requested and required to act as the eyes and ears locally for West Berkshire Council, identifying approved developments where the build does not reflect what was approved, and where development is undertaken without permission. We continue to receive and pass on information regarding enforcement matters to West Berkshire Council's Enforcement Department.

Please note: enforcement issues are not reported in the Newslink, given the individual nature of the matters involved. They are, however, discussed openly at our monthly council meetings.

Village Hall Development Project

At last year's Assembly I reported that a Development Committee had been established to work alongside the Village Hall Trustees on the building project. As you can all see, that was a great success!

I feel privileged to have been able to play a small part — whether wielding a sledgehammer in my trusted pink hard hat or making near-daily runs to Howdens. So many others got involved and it truly felt like good, old-fashioned community spirit at its best.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who has been involved in the project, past and present.

I was pleased to be able to nominate all the groups involved for a Community Championship Award. I am delighted to report that they were Highly Commended, and the certificate now hangs proudly in the hallway. The trophy will, I am sure, be on display in due course.

Congratulations also to Bob Wyatt, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award having served on the Parish Council for 45 years — the year he joined happens to be the year I was born, so I have quite some way to go to match him!

Highways & Traffic

Potholes

Highway condition remains a concern across the parish, with a marked increase in potholes both locally and across the district. West Berkshire Council has carried out some remedial work on the main Southend Road towards Chapel Row; however, roads such as Mariners Lane and Back Lane continue to present problems, likely due to the increase in traffic diversions caused by works at the College.

We would remind all parishioners to report highway issues via the West Berkshire Council website. The greater the number of reports received, the more likely West Berkshire are to respond.

Verge Markers

We would like to remind homeowners that, however tempting it may be, placing markers in front of properties to prevent driving on the verges — bricks, rocks, lumps of wood and similar objects — is deemed illegal. Such objects can be dangerous to pedestrians, particularly when close to the highway, and their removal is enforceable. Landowners may be liable for any damage or injury sustained in the event of an incident.

Speed & Traffic

As in previous years, speeding continues to be a major concern. Geoff Allnutt has been working tirelessly with West Berkshire Council to secure the use of their Smart SID (Speed Indicator Device) equipment. The Parish Council is also working with Hugh Whitaker and Richard Brown, who lead the Community Speed Watch initiative.

Volunteers are very much welcome — the more people involved, the more we can do. Please contact us if you are able to help.

Thank you to those that have already signed up and taken on the required training.

The Parish Council has recently received a grant of £4,000 from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for a Vehicle Activated Sign which will record the speed, and just the speed, of all passing vehicles.

The closure of the A4 on several occasions during this period has contributed to a notable increase in through-traffic in the parish.

We would also remind residents not to park on pavements, as this forces pedestrians into the road. Where parking on the road is unavoidable, please ensure that your vehicle is facing the correct direction.

Flooding & Drainage

Flooding of roads has been more of an issue this year due to the high volume of rainfall. West Berkshire Council has been clearing drains more frequently, and Thames Water has also attended to repair a number of blocked or broken pipes.

Hedges & Hedgerows

Hedges and hedgerows continue to cause concern. Letters requesting 'cutting back' rather than mere 'trimming' have been sent to residents where appropriate. It is important that hedges are kept properly cut so that pedestrians can use pavements, motorists can read signage, and sightlines at junctions remain clear and safe for all.

Environment & Community

Dog Fouling

Dog fouling on footpaths and footways remains a problem. There is particular concern along routes used by children walking to school and to the College, as well as on our green areas around the Cricket Green and the Village Hall playing field. Five bins are provided across both areas — there is really no excuse.

We are also in the process of securing an additional bin at the footpath near the old Post Office.

Telephone Box — Defibrillator

We were fortunate to receive a grant from West Berkshire Council which enabled us to restore the old BT telephone box at Bradfield College. It now houses a publicly accessible defibrillator, which represents a vital asset for the community.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Liz Sale and her team of volunteers who identified a qualified company to carry out the necessary repairs. Liz and her team have also created a small community garden beside the box, and Liz has kindly taken over management of the notice board, posting our agendas and other parish notices.

Grants & Financial Support

Grants to local clubs and organisations within the parish have totalled £3,300 this year. Awards are made only to those who submit written applications via the form available on our website. We invite applications from January, with consideration at our March meeting.

A total of £50,000 has been granted to Bradfield Village Hall in support of the development project.

Community Events

Remembrance Day Service

The Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial was very well attended, with over 80 people present. Our thanks go to Bradfield College for the Honour Guard and bugler; to the 1st Bucklebury Guides and Bradfield Brownies who paraded their flag; and to all who placed wreaths at the Memorial on Remembrance Sunday. We also thank the Bradfield Social Club for the use of their car park and building, and the Bradfield Women's Institute for providing tea and a wonderful selection of cakes.

Christmas Lights Perpetual Shield

The Bradfield Christmas Lights Perpetual Shield was awarded this year to the Harris Family of Southend Road, Bradfield Southend. Thank you to everyone who takes the time and effort to bring some light to a dark and damp end of the year.

External Meetings & Consultations

Members of the Parish Council have attended a West Berkshire Council District Conference and Pang Valley Flood Group meetings during this reporting period. The Parish Council has also been consulted on, and has commented on, numerous other topics.

Public Forum & Getting Involved

The Parish Council warmly welcomes speakers and members of the public to address us at the public forum held at the beginning of each monthly meeting. This is your opportunity to express your thoughts, concerns and wishes directly to the Council — ahead of, or in conjunction with, any pending planning applications.

The Council would like to thank everyone who has written to us or attended our monthly meetings. Please do continue to voice your thoughts and to take such an active interest in your Parish.

4. Report from District Councillor Ross MacKinnon.

There was no District Councillor's report.

5. Community Speed Watch (CSW) in Bradfield. (Hugh

Hugh is one of the two CSW co-ordinators for Bradfield. CSW is operational in both Bradfield Village and on Southend Road.

CSW is a community-based road safety scheme which is managed by the community with the support of Thames Valley Police (TVP). It can be used in 20, 30 and 40mph zones. The sites from which it is operated must be risk assessed for all users. Depending on the device two or three volunteers are required at the roadside, wearing hi-vis jackets. Using the device to determine the

speed, the volunteers then must record the speed, registration, make, model, colour and time of speeding vehicles which pass. After the session, the details of each speeding vehicle are entered securely onto a web portal where they will be assessed TVP and warning letters sent to the registered keeper of the vehicle. Repeat offenders may result in an officer attending the keepers address to speak with the registered keeper.

CSW can only be operated in daylight hours when the weather is good.

6. Reports were submitted in advance from the following organisations:

- St. Peter's Preschool
- John Simmonds Trust
- Bradfield WI
- Bradfield Lunch Club
- Bradfield May Fayre
- Bradfield Parochial Charities (The Alms houses Report)
- The Coffee Club (Fridays)
- Tutts Clump Burial Ground
- Bradfield Village Store

Reports are available in the Appendix at the end of these minutes.

7. Any other Business.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 8.10pm

Those present were invited to join in light refreshments after the meeting.

Appendix

1. St. Peter's Preschool.

I am writing on behalf of St Peter's Preschool to thank you sincerely for your generous £1,000 donation.

As you know, we launched an appeal last year due to low enrolment and a resulting shortfall in funding. I'm pleased to share that, thanks to several generous grants and the support of local businesses and families, our financial position is now much more secure.

We remain committed to providing a rich, engaging, and joyful curriculum for our children, and we would love to share a brief overview of what we've been up to over the past year.

Summer 2025 Our topic was *People Who Help Us*, with a focus on teamwork and mutual respect. The children worked together on a construction worksite role play, learned about VE Day, and made 1940s-style snacks. We explored helpers such as opticians, doctors, and dentists, and later discussed how we help others, especially as our older children prepared for BIG school. We enjoyed a sunny sports day, raising £336, and ended the term with paddling-pool fun.

Autumn 2025 This term's theme was *Transport & Travel*. We explored Rail by creating the St. Peter's Express, surveyed road vehicles, and learned about Air through a visit from Wings of Freedom. Sea was explored through water play, and Space through discovering Neil Armstrong. After half term, the children walked an impressive 50 km for our Mini Movers appeal. We held a separate Christmas Fair and Nativity for the first time, raising £815.

Spring 2026 Our New Year topic focused on the seven areas of learning, from exploring feelings to developing fine and gross motor skills in our worksite role play. We also held St. Peter's Got Talent. Our first Easter fundraising event raised £389. We finished the term with a trip to Rushall Farm, enjoying woodland walks, tractor rides, and an Easter Bonnet parade.

2. John Simmonds Trust.

A friend of mine recently bought a farm. The previous owners asked for permission to continue to access a large Sarsen stone. It was in memory of their son who died at a similar age, time and circumstances to John Simonds. There is no monument at Rushall Farm, just the thousands of children who have been coming here over the last 42 years. They have been able to learn about and experience the countryside, and be inspired by creation through a sunset, clouds scurrying across the sky, carpets of bluebells, tadpoles in the pond or gamboling lambs, so happy to be alive. This year over 12,000 children have come on school visits, camps and DoE. Many have had opportunities to gain confidence to face the ever-changing complex world surrounding them. What a privilege it is to be able to do something to contribute to the well-being of children in such a positive way. Please will you convey my thanks on behalf of the John Simonds Trust for your kind donation towards the work of the Trust. This money is so useful and helps to sustain what we do with the many people who use the site. There are very few who do not benefit from coming here. There is ample parking, picnic tables and the toilet facilities are always open. From Rushall Manor site you can walk as far as you are able and so the site is always busy and you are always welcome.

3. Bradfield WI.

2025 was another successful year for our Berkshire Federation branch, with membership growing to 67. We continue to prioritise a warm, welcoming atmosphere, and our open village meetings have helped attract new members and showcase our friendly community.

This year featured a wide range of engaging talks and activities, including virtual travel to Peru, insights into pearls, Indian cooking, Hampshire policing, medical detection dogs, and even advice on sleep. Our summer events were highlights, with a relaxed gathering at Douai Pavilion and a lively quiz evening in the President's garden.

Our Christmas celebration was the largest yet, featuring a generous buffet and festive entertainment. Although our January meeting was cancelled due to bad weather and illness, it will be rescheduled.

We are especially proud of our fundraising efforts for the village hall kitchen, supported by creative events such as a treasure hunt, afternoon teas, and sewing sessions. Additional contributions came from members hosting events in their homes.

Community involvement remained strong through the Mayfayre, Remembrance Day, and Christmas market, alongside ongoing care of the War Memorial. Regular raffles and stalls continue to fund quality speakers, and we look forward to another enjoyable year ahead.

4. Bradfield Lunch Club.

I would like to begin by extending my heartfelt thanks to Tina Clifton and her husband, who dedicated so many years to running the previous lunch club. Their commitment to the community laid a wonderful foundation, and it felt only right that such a valuable tradition should continue.

I am therefore delighted to announce that the lunch club has been relaunched here at the village hall, making full use of our fantastic new kitchen facilities.

Lunches are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month, and I am pleased to have kept the cost to just £5 per person. Thanks to a generous grant of £300 from the Parish Council — which covers the hall costs for our first ten lunches — I have been able to hit the ground running.

I am currently cooking for 16 guests each session and already have a waiting list of people keen to join. A special mention must go to Brenda Young, who has been an invaluable help and is the point of contact for all bookings — guests let her know whether they will be attending the lunch.

Finally, I'll be the first to admit that puddings aren't quite my forte! If anyone ever fancies contributing a dessert, it would be most gratefully received.

5. Bradfield Mayfayre.

Good evening everybody. We are all looking forward to the 42nd Bradfield Mayfayre on Bank Holiday Monday, 4th May and may the sunshine. Approx £9K was distributed to local organizations in 2025.

The Mayfayre is part of the Bradfield social calendar, and we still have the original objectives which is to be a local community get together event which is value for money and to give entertainment and an enjoyable time to visitors young and old, with normal traditional pastimes. Eating, drinking and being merry.

Maypole dancing, BBQ, bar tent with music, teas, ice creams, plate smashing, tossing the bale, bouncy castle, games for the kiddies etc.

A big Thank you to all the Mayfayre Committee both old and new, who give up their free time to put this community event together. We need a large pool of volunteers and always need more volunteers to take on minor and major roles before and more to help on the day. Each year the legislation gets more and more comprehensive. Perhaps some of you will have heard of Martyn's

Law bought in the aftermath of Manchester Arena bombing. An inexplicable tragic event. Going forward this is going to make running events like Mayfayre even more difficult to organize, we are however working to understanding how this will affect us next year.

Our villagers' generosity and loyalty make our task of providing vital funds and donations to local community projects, charities, clubs and voluntary organisations much easier. We hope to gather a good amount of money to distribute afterwards this year.

A special mention and thanks must go to our Mayfayre 2026 sponsors including Bradfield College, Bradfield Stores, Parkers, Renegade Brewery, Steve Waters, Andrew Dawes of Boot Farm and Mark Barnes and McVeigh Parker in helping us put together our show and reaching our Mayfayre aims.

Here's hoping the sun shines on us and we all enjoy a fantastic afternoon and catch up with friends and neighbours. If anybody would like to join the jovial band of Mayfayre helpers please speak to any of the 'hi-viz' jacketed stewards on the day.

6. Bradfield Parochial Charities (The Almshouses Report).

The Almshouses consist of four cottages in Mariners Lane set up under Charitable status to assist with the provision of housing for qualifying local people. In the last six years we have undertaken extensive and essential refurbishment of three of the four properties, originally constructed in 1810, costing £180,000. This has been financed in part through our reserves and by loans kindly granted by the Almshouse Association that are fortunately interest free and repayable over 10 years. We now anticipate the loan will be repaid in full by 2033.

We are regulated by the Charity Commission which has recently updated its guidance on strengthening management policies to ensure they are up to date and still relevant. To this end we have been carrying out a 'Health Check' on our management procedures. It remains our policy to manage income, expenditure and retained funds so that the Almshouses are kept in good order to ensure the wellbeing of the occupants. The Charity has purchased a second-hand Laptop to ensure all the documentation and records required are now stored in one place and are readily accessible.

The income of the Charity now exceeds the threshold of £25K per annum and therefore needs verification prior to being submitted to The Charity Commission. David Marrets in Tutts Clump has been appointed to do this each year before the deadline of 31st October.

Increased management requirements and a doubling of the cost of heating oil have both had an impact on our finances and the Charity would like to say a big thank you to the Parish Council for their recent kind donation of £300 which is much appreciated. All properties remain fully occupied with five happy residents.

7. The Coffee Club (Friday Coffee Mornings).

The Coffee Club continues to meet fortnightly on Fridays from 10.30am – 12.30pm in the hall at Tutts Clump Methodist Church. It's non-contributory and with no age requirements or limits, it's open to Anybody and Everybody in a warm and friendly atmosphere. There is plenty of lively chat, the opportunity to try word searches, nail painting, reading book loans / exchanges, raffles with loads of prizes and so much more.

Thank you to Bradfield Parish Council for your continued grant support that enables free access to a safe and a warm welcoming space for community and friendship for all.

8. Tutts Clump Burial Ground.

It has been a relatively quiet year for the Bradfield Methodist Burial Board, Tutts Clump in 2025-2026. During this time, we have had one only new resident to our congregation at Tutts Clump, a former attendee at the Sunday School, who's stated request was to be buried at the Chapel, when the time came. The only income received was the grant from Bradfield Parish Council towards the upkeep of the graveyard.

Our major expense during the year was to replace the lawnmower, used by our volunteers to keep the graveyard tidy and accessible, essentially for visitor safety rather than that of the residents.

Thank you to the local volunteers for their help, and to Bradfield Parish Council for your continued grant support towards the upkeep and maintenance of this local facility.

9. Bradfield Village Store.

The shop continued to perform well in 2025, achieving a small profit despite covering Post Office losses totalling £3,063.55. Remuneration exceeded staff costs in only four months, but the committee is still very committed to maintaining full-time opening hours to best serve customers. Financial reserves remain strong, and planning is underway for future investments, including replacing essential equipment such as fridges and freezers.

Staff support remains a priority. Salaries were increased in response to the rising National Minimum Wage, with a long-term goal of reaching the real living wage. Additional benefits now include a bereavement leave policy and extra holiday entitlement based on length of service.

The shop continues to prioritise local sourcing and environmental responsibility, offering recycling for items such as blister packs, bottle tops, and batteries, despite associated costs. Strong community engagement stays central to us, with fundraising efforts supporting multiple charities and local groups, raising significant amounts throughout the year.

The shop benefits from a dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and committee members, while also providing opportunities for young people. Customer loyalty has been evident through strong support and community action. Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2025, the shop remains a valued hub, and we continue to be so grateful for the support which is essential for its future success.