

## **Walkern Parish Council Report**

The Parish Council Meetings were held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at Walkern Sports and Community Centre. This report covers some of the issues we have been dealing with over the last few months. The full minutes of the meetings are available on the Parish Council website and on the Parish Council Notice Board outside Budgen's shop.

**The Parish Council would like to wish all the residents a happy and healthy 2026.**

### **A Wilder Walkern**

The Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published and is available online. The Parish Council own and manage green spaces in and around the village and encouraging biodiversity locally was an important part of the recently updated Neighbourhood Plan.

We held a very useful meeting with Tim Hill, Conservation Manager at the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, in order to discuss how we move forward with the project. The Trust has developed a number of nature plans for parish and town councils and local authorities in Hertfordshire. We were looking for advice on the kind of actions we should try to undertake and information about funding that might be available.

As previously reported, the Council is anxious that this should be a community project as well as helping native species and habitats within the Parish. Therefore, our first action will be to leaflet residents asking if they are willing to give their practical support towards rewilding. Tim assured us that it's possible for everyone to do something even within their own gardens and together we can make a difference.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The government published the new version of the NPPF for consultation on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025. The draft framework represents the most significant overhaul of national planning policy since the NPPF was first introduced in 2012.

It is possible to look at various websites for information about this draft framework, using your web browser to search the new NPPF. YouTube has

several helpful videos where the major changes are discussed, for example, "Have we got planning News for You" 17<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

Although this is a draft document, as a Council we are informing ourselves of its contents, trying to assess its possible effects on the village in terms of planning.

### **National Association of Local Councils**

An open letter from the newly elected chair, Cllr Iain Hamilton, recognised the growing expectations and increasing responsibilities faced by parish and town councils. He states these local councils are an "invaluable asset to our country" and "the bedrock of community life across England".

We are a small council and our monthly meetings are open to all. There is an opportunity for members of the public to raise issues or ask questions.

We are aware that family life is busy and demanding but we know that there is a public concern for the Parish and its residents, so do think about coming to the meetings and finding out about what we do.

**The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at the Walkern Sports and Community Centre commencing at 7.00 pm.**

**Christine Nudds, Parish Councillor**