

Walkern Parish Council Report

The Walkern Annual Parish Council Meeting and the monthly Parish Council Meeting were held on Thursday 7th May 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.

Notes from the Annual Parish Report

Michele Rist, as chair, was pleased to announce that the time and effort put in by councillors was achieving results in the various projects undertaken this year. The new **High Street Playground** attracts a large number of visitors, parents and children who appreciate the new play equipment but also adults who enjoy a quiet place to sit and read or enjoy a cup of coffee.

Bird boxes, kindly donated by a resident and then put up by Michelle and Jim Wakely are a recent addition. Planting wild flowers as part of our Wilder Walkern initiative is ongoing and we hope this year they will be more visible. This is alongside further planting of native bushes for pollinators, using plants that tolerate drier soils as no water is available on site.

The Council have at last taken over the ownership of the **Burial Site on Froghall Lane**. We have been responsible for sometime in keeping the area mown and tidy and we hope in future to make this a quiet place for people to sit and rest as it is still a burial site and must be treated with respect.

Walkern Sports and Community Centre The centre and field have shown a significant improvement, with boundaries tidied and the fenced area updated to make a comfortable and safe place. The interior has had a facelift with new doors and windows.

The committee running the WSCC is small and they put in a lot of time and effort. Michele thanked them on behalf of the Council for all their work as it is much appreciated.

Allotments These are well tended and thanks to Elaine Cook and her committee are overseen and run well.

Pigeon Hut The History Society has made this an interesting area to visit with lots of displays and now a wonderful timeline to follow the progress of Walkern.

Michele thanked Janet Woodall and her committee who have made the history of Walkern available to all of us.

Walkern Journal This publication allows residents to read the latest news about happenings in the village, either by hand-delivered paper copies or online. This is run and delivered by a small group of volunteers and is appreciated by all who subscribe.

General Appearance of the Village Grass cutting and general maintenance are all overseen by Michael Daley and Michelle Wakeley. Michele thanked them and volunteer residents who litter-pick around the village helping to keep Walkern a place to be proud of.

Planning Over the past year despite our updated Neighbourhood Plan there have still been large planning applications, as well as small ones. Each application is looked at and commented on by our councillors, who try to be fair and assess if it is in the best interest of the village. We try to use policies from our Plan or the East Herts Policy Framework to help us formulate a response.

A Wilder Walkern This is our latest project. We would like Walkern to be an example of how we care about the green spaces and corridors within our boundary, the wildlife that lives here now and has done for many years, and the diversity of flora that we have.

St Mary's Church, The United Reformed Church both are run for the benefit of villagers and are supported by a small hard-working group of volunteers. Councillors try to support our village churches as part of our grant scheme.

The report ended with Michele thanking a number of organisations and individuals who support the community and our Councillors Tom Deffley and Tony Stowe, the Clerk and members of the Parish Council.

Election of Chair and Councillors

Michele Rist was unanimously re-elected as Chair and Reg Marjason, Mike Allingham, Christine Nudds and Paul Warner agreed to serve on the Parish Council for another year.

The Oak Tree

The High Street playground has been home to a beautiful Oak tree for many years but time and weather had damaged a large part of the canopy and a huge

split appeared making it a real danger for the children who enjoy running around at the rear of the park. The canopy has now been reduced and all the dead limbs removed but the tree has been saved and there are already signs of green shoots emerging lower down the trunk so we hope it will continue to thrive.

Swifts in Walkern?

On Tuesday 5th May Clive Fleming from the Hertford Swift Group delivered a fascinating and highly informative presentation to the Wilder Walkern community.

The event was very well attended and feedback has been extremely positive. Clive spoke about his work in the Hertford area to protect the swifts' numbers which is in drastic decline. He explained the birds' behaviour, their long migratory journeys, and the local initiative focused on protecting and encouraging Hertford's breeding swift population.

The Hertford Swift Group manage nesting sites, installs boxes and swift bricks and advocates for swift-friendly planning and development in partnership with local organisations. They also provide advice, promote the use of audio callers to attract swifts to new sites and work with specialists to rescue and rehabilitate injured birds.

Clive and his team have kindly offered to supply and install swift boxes in Walkern. Several residents have already signed up and we will share updates on the Wilder Walkern website once installation begins.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 3rd June 2026 at the Walkern Sports and Community Centre commencing at 7.00 pm.

Christine Nudds, Parish Councillor