

Worplesdon Parish Council Annual Report



Chairman's Report 2025/2026

Annual Parish Assembly (APA)

The APA, which is the annual meeting of the electors of the Parish, was held at St Alban's Church Hall on 9 March 2026.

This year's event included presentations from the British Red Cross, Canine Partners, and Wood Street Infant School - all of whom highlighted the valuable charitable work they undertake within our communities.

Precept and Parish Finances

The parish precept funds the administration and services provided by Worplesdon Parish Council. It is collected by Guildford Borough Council and spent locally for the benefit of parish residents.

Included within the precept is funding for grant aid to local organisations, awarded in accordance with the Council's Grant Aid Policy. Grants are regularly provided to organisations including:

- Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance
- Crimestoppers
- Citizens Advice

Residents will have noted that the Parish Council's precept increased by 25.53% this year, forming part of an overall council tax increase of 5.6%. The increase was necessary due to several factors, including the loss of grants from Guildford Borough Council, preparations for local government devolution, increased IT costs, and the need to meet expanding legislative requirements, particularly relating to GDPR and financial reporting.

Worplesdon Parish Council receives no direct funding from central government and relies almost entirely on the locally raised precept to deliver services and support community projects.

Financial Summary for Year Ended 31 March 2026

Worplesdon Parish Council remains committed to sound financial management and transparency. During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, the Council's income and expenditure were carefully monitored to ensure efficient use of public funds.

Key figures:

Total income: £400,726.28

Total expenditure: £401,656.06

Closing balance (reserves): Earmarked reserves £148,130.96 and General reserves £143,485.32

The Council's finances were managed in accordance with statutory requirements, and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) has been prepared and submitted in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. A period for public inspection of the accounts is held annually. The full accounts, including the AGAR and internal audit report, are available to view on the Council's website:

worplesdon-pc.gov.uk/your-council/financial/
Alternatively, copies can be obtained by contacting the Parish Office.

Horsefield, Salt Box Road

During September 2025, the Parish Council became aware that Guildford Borough Council intended to sell the Horsefield at Salt Box Road. Worplesdon Parish Council sought to secure the land through a community asset transfer so that the approximately twenty-acre site could remain available for community use.

The Council's vision was for the land to provide accessible green space for recreation, wellbeing, and educational activities, particularly given its location adjacent to Whitmoor Common, which makes the site unsuitable for housing development.

To gauge community support, over 4,000 flyers were delivered across the parish and neighbouring areas by parish councillors and officers. Residents were invited to share their views through an online survey. The response was extremely positive, with 96% of respondents supporting a community asset transfer. More than 640 responses were received, representing the highest level of engagement the Parish Council has ever achieved through an online consultation.

The Parish Council believed that a community asset transfer would have represented better value for local residents, with estimated transfer



costs of around £5,000 plus approximately £20,000 to secure and maintain the site. Guildford Borough Council ultimately decided that the proposal did not meet its criteria for a transfer. The land is therefore being marketed for sale on the open market.

The Parish Council will be making a formal offer based on the feedback from residents highlighting that they feel they have already paid for the land to be purchased once and should not have to pay for it a second time.

The Parish Council will continue to monitor developments relating to the site.

Councillors and Staff

The Council was saddened this year by the passing of long-serving councillor David Bird, whose knowledge and commitment, particularly regarding planning matters, will be greatly missed.

During the year the Council welcomed three new councillors, although one subsequently resigned due to personal reasons.

There are currently vacancies representing Jacobs Well, Perry Hill, and Wood Street Village wards.

Being a parish councillor requires common sense, a willingness to listen, and a desire to support the local community. With more than 9,000 residents across the parish, councillors play an important role in helping shape the future of the area. Anyone interested in becoming involved is encouraged to contact the Parish Office on 01483 300094.

After twenty-seven years of dedicated service, the Parish Clerk, Gaynor White, has announced her intention to retire later this year. Her knowledge, professionalism, and commitment to the parish have been invaluable, and the Council wishes to place on record its sincere appreciation for her many years of service.

Community Engagement

The Parish Council continues to work closely with residents' associations and community groups across the parish. Regular meetings provide valuable opportunities to discuss local concerns, share information, and strengthen communication between the Council and residents.

Christmas Lights

As in previous years, Christmas lights were provided at Perry Hill Green, St Mary's Church, Wood Street Village Green, Fairlands Community Centre, and Jacobs Well Village Hall.

In addition, a Christmas tree was installed on Pitch Place Green, helping brighten the area along Worplesdon Road during the festive season. The Council received many messages of appreciation from residents.

Food Caddies

Replacement roadside food waste caddies are currently available at the Parish Office following the supply issues at Guildford Borough Council. This service reduces the need for residents to travel to Millmead, helping to save time, reduce carbon emissions, and avoid parking charges.

Community Speed Watch and Speed Data Recording

Community Speed Watch deployments continue to take place regularly across the parish. Volunteers monitor traffic speeds and report offending vehicles to Surrey Police, who issue warning letters where appropriate. The initiative is educational in nature and is intended to encourage safer driving.

Speeding offences have reduced at several deployment sites. Surrey Police have also undertaken enforcement activity at key locations, resulting in penalty notices being issued for a variety of offences.

The Parish Council works with Surrey County Council to facilitate Speed Data Recorder and Vehicle Activated Sign deployments across the parish. Sadly, the sudden and unexpected passing of SCC's Peter Harris has temporarily affected this work until a replacement officer is appointed to oversee the programme.

National Planning Policy Changes

In November 2025, the Government issued proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for consultation. These proposals include the most significant changes to the planning system since 1948. The reforms are intended to support the Government's commitment to delivering 1.5 million new homes during the current parliamentary term.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour, in particularly graffiti and fly-tipping, remains a concern in parts of the parish. Residents are encouraged to continue reporting incidents to the police or relevant authorities.



Chairman, Worplesdon Parish Council