



Annual Report 2025/2026

Report from the Chair

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Annual Report of the Parish Council. It has been another eventful year and your Parish Council has been busy on a full programme of work often supported by members of the community.

The Council welcomed a new caretaker in June last year, Tyler Coombes. The composition of the council was unchanged for the year except when Paul Schultz rejoined to fill a vacancy. I would like to thank all councillors for their contributions to the work of the Council.

Much of the Council's expenditure goes on maintaining its buildings and facilities. After the major improvements to Swallowfield Parish Hall in the preceding year, the focus turned to improvements to the Memorial Hall and Sports Pavilion in Riseley.

Your Parish Council relies on volunteers to support the council's work. My thanks go to Graham Stanley and members of the Flood Resilience Group who continue to monitor our watercourses and flag any issues. Also, thanks go to Angela King for her work on the Van Demans biodiversity project; and to Peter and Claire Sampson for once again coordinating two litter picks this year, and of course the volunteer litter pickers.

Last but certainly not least I would like to thank the officers and staff of the council for their dedication and excellent work.

Cllr. J. Anderson

Riseley Memorial Hall and Sports Pavilion

Over the last year the council has been working on a program of works to update the facilities at both buildings. The Memorial Hall now has new windows and doors to match those installed in the Sports Pavilion a couple of years ago. It has also benefitted from new/replacement heaters in the Main Room and the Gents. The Sports Pavilion has had replacement showers and both buildings have undergone various plumbing upgrades. The program of works will continue into 2026, on the list is an overhaul of the heating system in the Sports Pavilion, insulation of the loft in the Memorial Hall and moss removal on the roofs of both buildings.



The council is grateful to Riseley Tennis Club and Riseley Tea Room for helping the council look after these facilities.

The Council has also been working on plans to improve the entrance and exit of the car park, a planning application has been submitted and if approved work will start to install height restriction barriers and close off the exit.

Swallowfield Parish Shop

The Parish Council has invested in a new chiller unit and external condenser for the parish shop.

The 2 old units were only ever intended as a stop-gap when the shop had to move to a temporary home during re-furbishment of the shop. The new unit is much quieter and the temperature in the shop is much easier to control.

The new units are larger enabling Jasdeep to stock a wider range of products.



Van Demans

The council is delighted to report that Van Demans, an 11 acre site between Part Lane and The Devils Highway has been declared a Local Nature Reserve. The council has worked with a consultant Ecologist and Conservation Manager to produce a management plan and a vision for the 11 acre site. A grant application has been made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, if successful the council will begin work to implement the plan.

Health and Wellbeing



The seated exercise classes continue to be popular, often attracting more than 20 enthusiastic participants. It's not just an exercise class but also a place to socialise, meet friends and to enjoy a coffee and biscuit/cake. This year we have, supported by Age UK, introduced a new activity, Boccia (similar to boules). It's a seated game, the objective being to get your coloured balls as close as possible to the white "jack". Players enjoy coffee and cake at Coffee Corner afterwards. If you would like to try either class, just pop along to the Parish Hall (Boccia - 10am Wednesday, Seated Exercise - 11am Thursday)

The Council is pleased to have been able to award small grants to Citizens Advice Wokingham and The Link Visiting Scheme both of which offer support directly to our residents.

Finance

The Council benefits from significant returns on its financial investments which enable it to keep a low precept despite the increasing cost of maintaining the many buildings and facilities for which it is responsible. The Council has used the same investment manager for many years and is conducting a review of alternative providers to ensure it is receiving the right quality of service.

The boundary review resulted in a net reduction in the number of households in the parish which in turn resulted in a one-time adjustment (slight increase) in the precept contributions paid by each household.

The council received £19k of developer contributions in the year. These contributions are spent on improvements the council can make to its facilities.

Planning

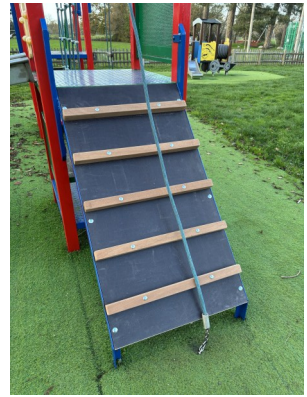
The Parish Council has reviewed 45 planning applications, posting comments or objections where appropriate. Most were straightforward householder applications but it has also objected to larger inappropriate developments, e.g. East of Trowes Lane.

Playgrounds

This year has seen remedial work carried out on the large climbing frames at Riseley and Swallowfield, with replacement of a significant amount of rotted wooden pieces. A new bench has been installed in the children's play area to replace one which literally fell apart.

Our caretaker has completed training and is now registered as an "Outdoor Operation Inspector" and uses the knowledge gain during his weekly inspections of all our play areas.

In 2026/2027 the council is looking at replacement fencing around the play area at Swallowfield.



Transport

The council has let Wokingham Borough Council know its views on the following consultations; *Transport Network Review* and *Speed Limits*. It has also lobbied the borough council regarding repairs to the bridge and signage to minimise the chance of future "accidents".

Parish Clean Up



The council is very grateful to Claire & Peter Sampson who continue to orchestrate our litter picks, running not only the Spring date but also the Autumn date, following the success of the first one in 2024. The council is grateful for their enthusiasm and commitment to removing the litter discarded by thoughtless individuals.

The council would also like to thank all those who, quietly pick litter on their regular walks, without them the pile would be even bigger. Bags and litter pickers are available from the Parish Office if you would like to join their efforts. Unfortunately, it is a never ending task.

The parish also suffers from fly-tipping at both parish halls. These are reported to Wokingham Borough Council and culprits are identified.

Natural Flood Management

Following completion of the Natural Flood Management (NFM) scheme in woodland to the west of Riseley the council asked Graham Stanley, Chair FRG to investigate the possibility of implementing a second phase as identified in the Herrington Report, a report commissioned by the council in 2018. The council would like to thank Graham for all his work but it has been established that further work is not possible due to land ownership.

FRG continue to provide valuable input to planning applications on the impact of new development on flooding and sewerage.

The Parish Council continues to monitor ditches and balancing ponds and to carry out clearance when necessary.

Community Governance Review

Following the community governance review . As a result, it is split into two wards:

West Ward

The **West Ward** is represented by 8 seats. The 8 councillors listed below represent this ward.

The **East Ward** is represented by 1 seat. There were no candidates for this seat, so the vacancy can now be filled by co-option.

Although the parish is split into two wards, all councillors work on behalf of the whole parish, so you do not need to live in the East Ward to stand as a councillor. However, to ensure the best possible representation of our parish it would be beneficial to have a representative from Farley Hill or the new East Ward. If you would like to find out more about what being a councillor entails please contact the Clerk or any current councillor. Contact details are below.

Your Councillors 2025/2026



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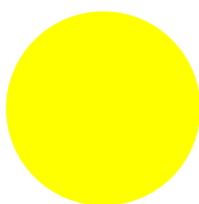
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Vacancy

Staff

Clerk: Liz Halson (Clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk)

Finance Officer/Bookings: Sue Howorth (finance_officer@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk)

Caretaker: Tyler Coombes

Parish Warden: Stephen Haynes

Keeping in touch

Email addresses can be found on our website. www.swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

Visit our website www.swallowfieldpc.gov.uk to view our Privacy Notice and complete the appropriate consent form if you would like to receive council communications. Follow on Facebook.

If you have any questions, please contact the Parish Clerk: 0118 9885 929 / clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

Your Borough Councillors - Spencers Wood & Swallowfield Ward

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Catherine Glover

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Chris Johnson

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