

Best Kept Village Competition 2022

Alderbury & Whaddon Village Report



Alderbury welcomes the CPRE Best Kept Village Competition Judges!

First and foremost, may I wish you a very warm welcome to our lovely village. You will probably be approaching Alderbury from Salisbury, turning from the A36 into Southampton Road that runs through the village and rejoins the main road at Whaddon. The postcode for your Satnav can be set to SP5 3AD which will guide you to the Village Hall car park in the centre of the village – there is plenty of free car parking and the village stores are nearby.

Due to COVID-19 we have not submitted an entry for the Best Kept Village Competition for two years. It's been very difficult to bring people together, but now at last, with restrictions lifted we are delighted to put forward our entry for consideration once again.

I note from the entry guidance that judges do not wish to receive turn-by-turn route instructions, preferring to explore the judging area for themselves. This is completely fine with us, feel free to wander. There are a few areas we would particularly like to bring to your attention and of which we are particularly proud, and which may be conveniently visited in the following order.

1. The Village Green and the Green Dragon – Satnav: SP5 3AR

Situated on your left as you enter the village is The Green. It's the historic heart of the old village with its working smithy and picturesque cottages surrounding a tree lined green. The village pub, The Green Dragon (featured in Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*), offers a good selection of meals and real ales and hosts a popular Petanque Club – the well-maintained terrain occupies a delightful spot with magnificent views across to the cathedral spire. The Club plays in the thriving New Forest League. On the Green itself stands the Fountain (from which the Village Magazine derives its name). The Fountain was erected to commemorate the coronation of King Edward on 9th August 1902 and has a reused double capital from nearby C11 Ivychurch Priory at each of its corners. These, like similar ones at Ivychurch Farm, probably came from the arcade of the mediaeval cloister. The Fountain is now in the care of the Parish Council. Across from the Fountain can be found the War Memorial, tended by volunteers but maintained along with the grass and trees by the Parish Council. The thriving village tennis club is situated alongside The Green and the area is served by two of the Parish Council's 14 bus shelters. It is also one of two locations for the village solar powered speed indicator device provided by the Parish Council in 2020. Also of note in this location is the freecycle exchange located in the disused wooden bus shelter across the road from the green. This is a now a popular site where local people leave items for reuse by others.

2. St Mary's Church – Satnav: SP5 3DW

As you proceed from The Green into the village you will come to the old High Street with its allotment gardens, bus shelter, grit bin (one of nine provided by the PC) and the volunteer managed book exchange in an old telephone box. Turn right here and follow Folly Lane into School Hill and then down into Tunnel Hill (so named after the ill feted Salisbury and Southampton Canal tunnel). Here on the right, you will find the idyllic St Mary's Church and its yew shaded (now closed) Churchyard. A church has stood on this site since 1341 but the present building was constructed in 1837. The Council owns and manages the car park and the peaceful and well-maintained burial ground. The Church runs several young peoples' groups, including Sunday Squad, Little Fishes, Big Fishes and The Net. The Church also organises the popular

Boundary Café every Friday morning in the Village Hall with plenty of homemade cakes.

3. **The Village Hall and Recreation Ground – Satnav: SP5 3BH**

Retracing our steps from the Church back down Light's Lane, turn right onto Southampton Road opposite Junction Road, behind which stands one of the village's four very popular allotment sites – there is always a waiting list for plots. Shortly, on your right you will find the Village Hall and Recreation Ground. The impressive village hall was reopened in 2021 following a £450k refurbishment, it now has an additional meeting room, improved main hall, kitchen, stores, office, and treatment room all funded by the Parish Council. The hall is leased to a management committee which is also responsible for the adjoining Social Club. The hall has an enlarged car park with new fencing and an outdoor seating area. This is the heart of the modern village with a packed programme of social events and activities. The wonderfully presented and family oriented social club offers darts, pool, live gigs, comedy nights, quizzes and much more. The village hall and social club also host the 'Picnic in the Park' event that this year celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Hall offers a diverse range of activities from scouts and amateur dramatics, through to keep fit classes and hearing-aid clinics. The car park also hosts a fish and chip van once a week and an occasional wood fired pizza truck, saving villagers the trek into Salisbury for a takeaway.

Alongside the village hall is the very well-equipped Recreation Ground. The pavilion is leased to Alderbury Football Club who still use the pitch for matches and training sessions. There is a mix of equipment on the field – table tennis, basketball, skateboarding and outdoor gym equipment as well as children's play equipment and a picnic area. There is also the ever-popular zip-wire ride and swinging basket – both installed in 2019. A ban on dogs and a good supply of bins helps to keep the playing field tidy. At the far end of the field is the recently refurbished Community Resource Hub (cunningly disguised as a garage). This is where the volunteer group equipment is held and accessible to the group leaders who have keys. At the front of the building is a brand new raised-bed that is looked after by the wildlife volunteers.

Behind the village hall is the very successful Alderbury Bowls Club with competitive and friendly matches all through the spring and summer and well into autumn. The venue also hosts numerous clubs and societies.

The village hall car park is also the start and finish point for the circular village walk, a 5-mile path maintained by the [Alderbury and Whaddon Footpath Volunteers](#) who also look after the other public rights of way in the village.

Across the Southampton Road from the Recreation Ground you will find the brand new Waleran Close community orchard and wildflower meadow (more of that below), you will also find the village sign and map.

Wildlife Friendly Alderbury

In 2020 the village embarked on an ambitious environmental project working in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Wild Landscapes Team. We were pleased to be the first village to launch such a project in the County. The programme was kick-started by the parish Council but is now managed mainly by an enthusiastic group of around 25 volunteers. A number of projects have been identified, the first was started in 2021 – the community orchard and wildflower meadow in Waleran Close immediately opposite the Recreation Ground. 10 fruit trees were planted in the Autumn and this spring work began to establish the meadow. The Parish Council's ground maintenance contract has been amended to allow the grass to grow in the meadow with tidy paths on the borders and through the pasture. The apple, pear and plum trees will provide free fruit for villagers from 2023 onwards. The school, scouts and guides are all involved with the project.

Many other environmental and wildlife friendly projects are in the pipeline. This year, work starts on the rewilding of Oakwood Grove open space. This will see new hedgerows planted, a new copse, pond and wildflower meadow area established as well as species specific habitats bat, bird and hedgehog boxes and bug hotels installed. Also, this year it is hoped to make a start on the 'mini-forest' on a green space in Spiders Island. Further down the line is the possibility of a major heritage project taking in the old pre-Beeching railway line and the remains of the Salisbury and Southampton Canal. You can find out more about [the Wildlife Friendly Alderbury Project here](#).

A Vibrant Community

Residents really care about the village and there is no more evidence of this than the wide range of volunteer groups actively improving the village. The Parish Council supports and insures the following volunteer groups:

- [Footpath Volunteers](#) – maintain the circular path and other rights of way
- [Wildlife Friendly Alderbury Group](#) – manage the wildlife projects
- [Winter Weather Wardens](#) – take to the streets to tackle snow, ice, and floods.
- [Speedwatch Team](#) – part of the Wiltshire Community Speedwatch scheme, the volunteers are out monitoring speeding vehicles every month.
- [Litter Volunteers](#) – sadly affected by the ongoing ban on officially organised litter picking following the Salisbury Novichok poisonings.
- [The Gardening Club](#) – who look after the Spring bulbs and planters in the village
- [Allotment Association](#) – manage the Council's allotments
- [Village Hall Committee](#) – run and maintain the village under a lease granted by the Parish Council.

In addition, there are a large number of clubs and organisations in the village (as you will see from the copy of the Fountain parish magazine that I sent through) with things for both the young from Beavers, cubs, scouts, little fishes church group and cheerleading to groups for the more mature such as the local history research group, Mothers Union, WI, and Royal British Legion to name but a few. In addition to these clubs and the wide range of activities on offer at the village hall there is also the 'Picnic in the Park' that will celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. The event will take place on the afternoon and evening of Saturday 11th June. It promises to be quite a spectacle with bunting, bouncy castle, food vendors and stalls arranged around the picnic area and main stage where acts will perform all afternoon and into the evening.

There really are no excuses for being out of shape in Alderbury either. The village is home to a good variety of sport and keep fit facilities. The Alderbury Football Club has two competitive senior teams, women's teams and 10 junior sides competing in local leagues. The Club relocated to its brand new £1m facility in 2020 which now boasts 8 top quality pitches, new club house and large car park. It offers first class soccer facilities serving an area well beyond the village boundary. We also have thriving tennis, bowls and petanque clubs as well as keep-fit classes in the village hall on most days of the week. There is also the BMX track located in the Longford Estate woods at the old canal plus the skateboard facility and outdoor gym in the Recreation ground.

We are lucky to have two thriving convenience stores in the village that are always busy. The Post Office offer a range of services to the community and has been upgraded and the opening hours extended to match normal shop hours.

At Christmas a 20-foot-high Christmas illuminated tree is installed at Waleran Close, opposite the Village Hall. The switch on of the lights is accompanied by the Scouts singing carols around the tree, along with many residents, followed by mulled wine and mince pies at the Village Hall.

A Caring Place

The village has a baby and toddler club, a pre-school, and a community shopper bus for older and frail residents. Every Friday morning there is the Boundary Coffee Shop in the Village Hall organised by St. Mary's Church where many residents come together for a cuppa and a natter. It is always very well attended and our local PCSO tries to attend when his shifts permit. I attend weekly so that residents can report concerns to the parish council. On the third Friday there is a hearing aid service in attendance. It is largely for re-tubing aids and providing new batteries. This is a very welcome service to the village as it avoids special journeys to the Salisbury District Hospital for these services. There is also a St. Mary's Lunch Club where once a month about 20 or so parishioners go to a local hostelry for lunch. The orders are pre-ordered from a set menu It is always very popular and very reasonably priced.

We have always been very active on litter in the village, but this has proved difficult for the parish council to organise over the last four years due to Public Health England's advice to avoid picking up litter because of the Novichok poisoning in Salisbury – something that made it onto the BBC One Show. This is very frustrating for the volunteers, but self organising groups are still going out and about cleaning up around the village.

With a parish precept of around £55k available we try very hard to keep on top of repair and maintenance. We are always upgrading the fabric of the village - gates, fences, noticeboards, benches, play equipment and the like. We have recently replaced five street signs and repaired three others. In 2021 we also funded works to cut back the encroaching pathway verges that were obstructing the pavements along Southampton Road at a cost of £7k. We work hard to support our Wiltshire Council Parish Steward to address streescene issues and potholes in the village and we respond quickly to any complaints we receive. I hope you will have seen the various flower tubs around the village. We are indebted to the Gardening Club for planting and caring for them throughout the year. The horseshoe manger on Waleran Close was made and given by Basil, our local blacksmith.

We hope you agree that the village looks and feels well cared-for.

I enclose a copy of the Fountain Magazine, our local newsletter that is very widely read in the village. Alderbury also now has a new and updated website www.alderburyparishcouncil.gov.uk where Council agenda and minutes are regularly updated, along with local information and useful links. This site is also the new home of the Local History Research Group resources, something that had been 'offline' for some considerable time.

One other recent innovation is the launch of a brand-new digital map of the village. [You can find the online village map with dropdown filters for all of the places, facilities and information provided in this report here.](#) I have enclosed printed copies of this map for your use during your visit.

I hope this gives you an overview of what Alderbury has to offer. Enjoy your visit! The parish council and I look forward to your feedback.

Best wishes,



Elaine Hartford.

Chair of Alderbury Parish Council.