

## Abbots Langley Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 in the Council Offices, Langley Road, Abbots Langley.

Those Present:

Chairman	Councillor D J Major
Vice Chairman	Councillor L Lay
Councillors	Councillor Mrs S Bedford Councillor G W Emery Councillor J Hill Councillor Mrs D J Lay Councillor M T Morton Councillor Ms B Phipps Councillor O Roe Councillor K D Williams Councillor J Wyatt Councillor Miss I V Young
Officers:	Tim Perkins - Clerk to the Council
Police:	Sergeant 1275 Neil Canning
Also present:	County Councillor Paul Goggins

The meeting opened at 7:30pm.

### **271. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received, accepted and recorded from Councillor White (unwell) and Councillor Giles-Medhurst (family duties).

### **272. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Bedford notified and recorded a personal interest in agenda item 8, Environmental Audits.

### **273. Public Participation**

No members of the public had expressed an interest in addressing the Parish Council.

### **274. Hertfordshire Police**

Sgt. Canning reported that recorded crimes in the area for September 2009 were 76, compared to 129 in September 2008. It was clarified that these are actual crimes recorded, not reports to the Constabulary's offices or control centres.

Thefts from out buildings and general equipment thefts have shown a rise, four arrests have recently been made and enquiries are ongoing. As previously advised, the ASBOs taken out on local offenders are having a positive effect; ASBOs against further individuals are being progressed. A number of bicycles had been stolen from the Ovaltine area, arrests from outside of the area have been made.

Preparation for Halloween are ongoing, there will be a significant presence in the area and officers are working with local business to limit the supply of items such as eggs and flour, which in the past have been used in anti-social behaviour.

Portable Automatic Number Plate Recognition equipment has been in use. A disqualified driver was identified, who was also on licence from prison, he was returned to custody.

Sgt. Canning has been in discussions with TRDC about moving the gate from the rear of the car park at Leavesden Country Park to the front, as this will limit access to youths who are causing problems in the evening. District Council members are involved in discussions with TRDC officers on the parking situation as they want to ensure access for users who may want to legitimately use the car park early in the morning.

## Abbots Langley Parish Council

Youths congregating at the youth shelter on the Manor House grounds are causing problems for users of the Multi use Games Area. Sgt. Canning asked if alternative locations for the shelter could be considered. The Clerk advised that officers had given this some consideration earlier in the year, but could not come up with a more appropriate location. The Clerk will walk around the area with Sgt. Canning.

Councillor Emery requested further attention to parking and traffic problems at Bedmond Village Primary & Nursery School. Concerns had been raised with him by one of the school's governors. Sgt. Canning will continue to provide support to the school, but advised the impact officers can have is often limited and short term.

Councillor Williams asked if any incidents had been reported at the Lemonfield play area. Sgt. Canning advised that there had been some reports a number of weeks ago and attention was being given by the Abbots Langley and North Watford Community teams, as the play area is on the border of these areas. The Clerk advised that daily inspections had been carried out by the Community Warden and there had been no vandalism noted, or anti-social behaviour reported to him. No reports have been received in the office.

Members had requested that vehicle speed checks were made on Langley Lane. Sgt. Canning suggested that in the first place the speed measuring equipment installed by Herts Highways would provide more extensive data.

Sgt. Canning advised that the laser speed measuring equipment used by officers needed a straight 25m length of road, with a clear view, to get an accurate reading and this made its use in the High Street area difficult.

Councillor Mrs Bedford requested clarification of the Constabulary's "blue light" policy. Sgt. Canning confirmed that vehicle audible warnings should be used at all times vehicles were running on blue lights, unless a silent approach had been specifically requested. Attention was also requested to vehicle speeds on Gallows Hill Lane, where the straight stretch of road leading up the hill maybe more appropriate for use of speed measuring equipment.

County Councillor Goggins advised that at a Joint Members Highways Panel meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October would be reviewing the implementation of a 20 mph zone in Abbots Langley High Street, he was not sure of its chances of being approved as there were many competing projects and funds were limited.

### **275. Minutes of the Meeting**

It was proposed by Councillor Miss Young, seconded by Councillor Morton and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009, copies of which had been sent to all Members of the Parish Council prior to the meeting, be taken as read and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **276. Minutes for Adoption**

The following committee minutes were adopted, approved for publication on the Council's website and passed to the committees for resolution.

Planning & Highways Committee - 16<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

Leisure Committee - 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009.

Agenda item 249 on the Leisure Committee meeting minutes may need clarification when the minutes are approved at the next meeting of that committee.

The Chairman agreed to move the adoption of the Staffing Committee minutes to a Part II discussion, as members asked for clarification of matters in the minutes which referred to a member of staffs terms of employment.

## Abbots Langley Parish Council

### 277. Matters referred from Committees

Members were supportive of the initiative to develop a Community Orchard, however this should be as a community lead project, rather than one directly implemented and managed by the Parish Council.

Councillors Ms. Phipps and Mrs Lay were asked to work with the Clerk on drawing up some initial ideas, particularly around community engagement, with a target of presenting an initial report to the November Leisure Committee meeting.

Members did express concerns about potential vandalism and site security would need to be considered during the process of site selection.

### 278. Environmental Audit

Councillor Mrs Bedford having previously declared a personal interest in this item withdrew from the meeting for all discussions.

Councillor Williams had submitted a paper to members on the outline terms of an Environmental Audit, the Clerk was asked to develop this into a document suitable for companies to tender against. Specific mention of cost v. benefit analysis should be included.

The Clerk was supportive of the idea, but highlighted that the appointment of the consultants would be key to the success of the project and suggested that prior to appointment the short list of consultants be asked to present to the Parish Council, or a number of nominated members, to assess the suitability of their approach to the expected outcome of members and officers.

The Clerk asked that members who had experience of such audits pass on contact details of appropriate consultants.

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Wyatt and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council should undertake a tender process to establish the costs and potential benefits of an Environmental Audit.

Members appreciated that the pressures of the budget process meant that the Clerk may not be able to give this immediate attention, but that the Clerk would hope to have a cost for consideration prior to finalising the budget.

Members will give consideration to issuing a press release on this matter.

### 279. Calendar of Meetings

It was requested the "Club" be amended to "Centre" and that a Leisure Committee meeting be added for August 2010.

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Lay and **RESOLVED** that the calendar of meetings for municipal year 2010/2011 be approved, subject to the above amendments.

A vote was requested this was passed nine in favour, one against and one abstention, the Chairman did not vote.

Councillors Ms. Phipps and Mrs Lay will meet with the Clerk to discuss governance and the management of Leisure Committee meetings.

### 280. Correspondence

BT Payphone

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Bedford, seconded by Councillor Ms. Phipps and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council should initiate the process to take over responsibility for the red phone box in Hunton Bridge, which will have all communication equipment removed.

A vote was requested and was passed nine in favour, two against, the Chairman did not vote.

Whilst members wanted this iconic facility preserved, as it is in the conservation area, they would prefer that its upkeep should be handed over to a local society.

## Abbots Langley Parish Council

Councillor Lay as the Parish Council's nominated representative to the Abbots Langley Local History Society will raise this at their next meeting, to see if the society would be interested in taking on this project.

### HCC Langleybury Playing Fields

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Bedford, seconded by Councillor Williams and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should write to HCC and counter propose £1,050 as the annual rental.

### Hertfordshire Constabulary

Members noted the response from the Constabulary and asked that the Clerk sets up the offered visit to the Control Room.

### TRDC Community Toilets

Members were disappointed with the response from TRDC. The Clerk was asked to write to Peter Kerr to ask that the District Council arrange for appropriate signage of their notice boards in the village and provide copies for the Parish Council notice boards, noting that this is a service paid for by TRDC.

### 281. NALC Consultation

Members noted this consultation and had no response.

### 282. NHS

The Clerk was asked to respond to this consultation, taking advice from Councillor Ms. Phipps.

### 283. Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended:

20<sup>th</sup> September - Battle of Britain Service, St. Pauls Langleybury. The Chairman thanked members who also attended.

2<sup>nd</sup> October - Allotment Prize Giving.

3<sup>rd</sup> October - Abbots Langley Community Centre. Toast to the Centre.

4<sup>th</sup> October - Abbots Langley Tough Ten.

4<sup>th</sup> October - Abbots Langley Community Centre Grand Opening.

Members were disappointed at the number of "no shows" at the Allotment Prize Giving, especially as guests had all responded that they would be attending. This matter to be referred to the Leisure Committee.

### 284. Clerk's Report

Members noted the comments about formal contact with the Police being through the Parish Council, rather than from committees and agreed to this approach in the future.

The Clerk advised that he would now be in the office on 15<sup>th</sup> October, but out on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### 285. Monthly Statement of Accounts

It was proposed by Councillor Morton and seconded by Councillor Mrs Bedford and **RESOLVED** that the Statement of Accounts for September 2009 as notified to the Council be approved.

### 286. Part II

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Bedford, seconded by Councillor Williams and **RESOLVED** as this item will consider the terms and conditions of a member of staff's employment the press and public will be excluded, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the LGA 1972, s100 & 102.

Abbots Langley Parish Council

287. Minutes for Adoption

The Clerk was asked to confirm if the arrangements for the Chairmanship of the Staffing Committee's meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> September were lawful.

Principally that as the Chairman of the Council was present should he have taken the Chair, in the absence of the committee Chairman and no Vice-Chairman having been previously appointed.

Having consulted Local Government Administration, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, the Parish Council's Standing Orders and other reference sources the Clerk found no trace of such a requirement. There was a legal requirement for the Chairman of the Parish Council to take the Chair for a Parish Council meeting (if present, even if arrived late), but there was no similar requirement for a committee meeting.

Councillor Ms. Phipps the Chairman of the Staffing Committee arrived late for the meeting, when proceedings were substantially underway. Councillor Ms. Phipps asked the newly nominated Vice Chairman of the committee to continue to chair the meeting, this does not appear to contravene the Parish Council's Standing orders, or statute.

The Clerk's advice was therefore that the arrangements for the meeting and the minutes thereof were appropriate and lawful.

The Clerk suggested that in a future revision of Standing Orders the Parish Council may want to consider inserting a clause that requires a committee Chairman to take the Chair should they arrive late for a meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bedford and **RESOLVED** that following clarification of the above the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009 should be adopted.

The Clerk was asked to provide a report to the next Parish Council meeting on the background to and costs of the staff members sick pay arrangements.

The meeting closed at 9:48pm.

Signed:

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Dated:

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