

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 7th December 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 C Daily Councillor G W Emery Councillor S Giles-Medhurst Councillor Mrs D J Lay Councillor M T Morton Councillor Ms B Phipps Councillor O Roe Councillor K D Williams
Officers:	Tim Perkins - Clerk to the Council
Police:	Sergeant 1275 Neil Canning
Also present:	County Councillor Paul Goggins

The meeting opened at 7:33pm.

After opening the meeting and prior to the commencement of formal business the Chairman asked members to observe a minutes silence in memory of Mrs Sue Bartrick, who passed away on the 28th November 2009. Mrs Bartrick had served on both this and Three Rivers District Council. The Chairman said the Parish Council's sympathies were with Stephen and Kate at this sad time.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst thanked the Chairman and members for their kind sympathy and reminded all present that Sue's funeral would be held on Thursday 10th December 2:00pm at West Herts Crematorium and afterwards at the Manor House, to which everyone was invited.

407. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Hill (unwell), Councillor White (unwell), Councillor Wyatt (unavailable) and Councillor Miss Young (other engagement).

408. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Bedford notified and recorded a personal interest in agenda item 11, Environmental Audits.

409. Public Participation

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

410. Hertfordshire Police

Sgt. Canning updated members on the enquiries into the vandalism at Leavesden Country Park. Although witnessed by members of the public, they did not call the police; descriptions of the offenders are patchy and offer no real assistance to officers.

Patrols are ongoing and have focussed on the YMCA and exercise equipment side of the park (north), patrols have also taken place on the south side. It is a large area for officers to patrol and they have had some success in breaking up groups of youths and confiscating alcohol.

Members were concerned about the report of the incident in the Watford Observer. It was felt comments saying the area was not patrolled by police were misleading, inviting vandals into the area.

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Through a media column Councillor Mrs Bedford would be encouraging residents to report crimes when they were in progress, even if they did not want to leave their details.

Sgt. Canning is working with the Park Ranger on access control solutions, including the use of key safes, which will allow police vehicles to enter the grounds at all hours. Members were concerned that key safes may become a target for vandals.

Councillor Williams, assured Sgt. Canning that although he was sometimes subject to detailed questioning at Parish Council meetings, the Parish Council fully supported the work of Sgt. Canning and his team and members realised that he was working under resource constraints. Sgt. Canning advised that he was still a full time officer down, following PC Henning's long term medical leave. PC Henning has recently returned to work but only on light duties.

Sgt Canning updated members on other matters:

- Recent local arrests have been made for dealing cannabis and cocaine.
- An arrest has been made following the spate of shed burglaries in the Abbots Road area.
- A five year ASBO has been served on a homeless woman who had been living in a tent in the Ovaltine estate area, whose behaviour had become increasingly erratic.
- Officers are working with other agencies to secure ASBOs on the youths causing problems in the High Street area. These take some time to put in place, but it was hoped these would be completed by early in the New Year.
- Officers have had to deal with a number of incidents at the Eric Shepherd Unit at Warren Court in Woodside Road; the incidents took up officer time, but as charges for serious offences were laid this required considerable effort from officers to prepare case papers, taking officers off usual patrol duties.
- School visits are taking place, with officers and PCSOs focussing on burglary prevention.
- Investigations are ongoing into two fatal road traffic accidents in the area.

Officers are giving attention to the parking problems in the Mallard Road area. These have been caused by the managing agents of Leavesden Court implementing revised parking arrangements on-site, displacing vehicles onto surrounding streets.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst asked if he could be advised how many parking tickets had been issued in the area, he also asked if the police could put pressure on Herts Highways to consider parking restrictions, as obstruction ticketing seemed a waste of officer time. Councillor Giles-Medhurst and Councillor Williams as ward members had met on site with Sgt. Canning to review the current problems and through other channels would try to get focus given to resolve the issue of parking restrictions.

Councillor Mrs Bedford advised that there were similar parking problems on the Hunton Bridge Wharf estate. Officers at Three Rivers District Council were looking into issues around the allocation of parking spaces on the estate, to see if they comply with planning consents.

Sgt. Canning advised that PCSOs in Hertfordshire cannot issue tickets, as the force only allows the minimum level of powers to its PCSOs.

Councillor Daily asked for attention to be given to parking and traffic control problems in the area of Abbots Langley School, as there was significant disruption caused by inconsiderate parking during the usual drop off and pick up times. Sgt. Canning advised that schools parking across the area did get attention from officers, but that any impact they had was usually only short term.

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Councillor Emery asked if the police were aware of the line of sight obstruction caused by signs erected by a business selling turkeys at the junction of Serge Hill Lane, Church Hill and High Street Bedmond. County Councillor Paul Goggins advised that Herts Highways were aware and instructions have been, or would be very soon, issued to the business to remove the signage.

The Clerk was asked to write to Western Area Commander Chief Superintendent Jeremy Alford, to ask about Christmas policing arrangements, stressing that members expected adequate cover in the parish area and that all resources would not be diverted to policing the town centres.

The Clerk was also asked to invite the Chief Superintendent and the Three Rivers District Council representative on the Herts Police Authority to a future Parish Council meeting, to discuss policing priorities and also to understand why the force has adopted a policy of only allowing PCSOs minimum powers.

411. Standards Committee

This item was deferred until at least the February Parish Council meeting. Mr Sniders apologised for his absence, but he had been detained on unplanned business.

412. Minutes of the Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Lay, seconded by Councillor Emery and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 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.

The Clerk advised committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman that it would be necessary, as part of the portfolio preparation for Quality Parish Council status, for an additional copy of minutes to be signed at all meetings for the foreseeable future

413. 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 - 11th & 25th November 2009.

Leisure Committee - 16th November 2009.

Finance and Administration Committee - 23rd November 2009

Minor text amendments notified to the Clerk were agreed and the minute book updated accordingly.

414. Matters Referred from Committee

- a. Members noted the completion of the Parish Council's Asset Register.
- b. The Clerk advised that the budget had been updated in line with the request from the Planning and Highways Committee.

415. Land Registry

Members noted the Clerk's report and agreed that this should be considered a low priority task. The Clerk agreed, but advised members that there may be some benefit in registering property on a gradual basis and that registration of the Manor House grounds, maybe a good starting point.

The Clerk will update members in the new financial year.

416. Budget 2010/2011

Members noted the progress on the budget. Councillor Williams advised members that following discussion with the Clerk, he was satisfied that work was almost complete. The major outstanding items were the updating of income numbers immediately after the Christmas period and the addition of the Band D base data, which was still outstanding from Three Rivers District Council.

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417. Environmental Audit

Councillor Mrs Bedford withdrew for discussions on this item.

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Ms. Phipps and **RESOLVED** that following the tender process reported by the Clerk, the Parish Council should contract with 3 Acorns to carry out an Environmental Audit.

The Clerk was asked to liaise with 3 Acorns on timing and contractual arrangements. Members noted the Clerk's concerns about paying for work to be carried out twelve months in advance.

418. Hertfordshire County Council

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Mrs Lay that the Clerk should write to Hertfordshire County Council, outlining the costs the Parish Council incur in maintaining the Langleybury Playing Fields and advising that the Parish Council would not settle at a figure above £1,050 as previously advised. The Clerk advised the HCC would probably initiate a formal dispute process.

A vote was requested; five members were in favour of the proposal, four against.

419. Snow and Ice Clearance

Members noted the Clerk's report and the advice received from the Parish Council's insurers. Members felt the Parish Council was in a "no win" situation.

The Clerk will draft a policy. Councillor Williams advised that a previous employer had received very similar advice from their insurers.

The Clerk was asked to see if any evidence was available on best practice around clearance of snow and ice, or leaving untreated and subsequent injury rates.

420. Local Development Framework

The Planning and Highways Committee will be reviewing the update at their next meeting. Councillor Williams will work with Councillor Morton on updating the Parish Council's response. The Clerk advised that this will need to be presented to the January Parish Council meeting for approval.

421. District and County Council Member Reports

County Councillor Paul Goggins advised that £8,900 of his £10,000 locality budget had been allocated and he was hoping that the remaining amounts would be allocated prior to the calendar year end.

422. Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended:

23rd November 2009 and 1st December 2009 - Local Area Forums at Bedmond and St Michael's Catholic High School, both of which dealt mainly with the revised Local Development Framework.

3rd December 2009 -Abbots Langley Carol Concert.

The Clerk advised that he would bring a report to the Leisure Committee on the Carol Concert. Members that attended said it was an excellent event and asked the Clerk to pass on thanks to all staff that worked so hard on arrangements.

423. Clerk's Report

BT Red Phone Box

Members noted the progress on adopting the phone box. Leavesden ward members will give some thought to possible uses and will report back to the Parish Council.

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Christmas New Year Arrangements

Members noted the revised opening hours for the offices.

It was asked if the Works Team could give attention, over the holiday period, to the potential hazard created by bottles being left near the bottle banks in the Manor Lodge Car Park.

Three Rivers Benefits Officer

Members noted the update from the Clerk. It is understood that the Benefits Officer will be withdrawn from the Parish Council offices at Christmas. Residents will be able to use the call in centre at Watford Town Hall, now that Watford BC and Three Rivers DC Revenue and Benefits have merged under shared services arrangements.

The Clerk will be given details of how residents can access benefits advice and the mobile Benefits Officer support, so enquires can be properly directed in the New Year.

424. Monthly Statement of Accounts

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

425. Part II

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs lay, seconded by Councillor Morton and **RESOLVED** as this item will consider the initial stages of a legal agreement that the Parish Council maybe entering into and 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.

426. Abbots Langley Bowls Club

Members noted the correspondence and the Clerk's update. The Clerk will revert when the matter has progressed.

427. Staffing Matters

Members noted the update from the Clerk.

The meeting closed at 9.32pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____