

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 8th February 2010 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 K D Williams Councillor D White Councillor J Wyatt Councillor Miss I V Young

Officers: Tim Perkins - Clerk to the Council

Police: Sergeant 1275 Neil Canning
Temporary Chief Superintendent Iain McVie

Herts Police Authority Mrs Susan Warman

Also present: County Councillor Paul Goggins

The meeting opened at 7:30pm.

510. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, accepted and recorded from Councillors Giles-Medhurst (work commitment), Daily (other commitment), Roe (unwell) and Ms. Phipps (work commitment).

511. Declarations of Interest

None.

512. Public Participation

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

513. Hertfordshire Police

Temporary Chief Superintendent Iain McVie, Western Area Commander and Mrs Susan Warman Hertfordshire Police Authority member for Three Rivers were present to discuss policing matters raised by the Parish Council.

a: Sergeant Canning presented his local area report.

An arrest was made following a burglary in Balmoral Road, the offender was not known to police and he has admitted to eight other offences. An arrest has been made following an assault in the Swan Public House.

Vehicle speed checking in Bedmond resulted in seven tickets being issued; further operations are planned for Toms Lane and Gallows Hill Lane. Automatic Number Plate Recognition operations are ongoing. Councillor Miss Young asked that attention be given to speed checking in Langley Lane. Vehicle obstruction has also been addressed, seventeen tickets have been issued, specific attention has been given to obstruction caused to the zebra crossing in the High Street by users of Lloyds TSB's cash dispenser.

Incidents of criminal damage are being addressed, car windows were smashed in Abbots Road, PCSOs and night patrols are giving attention.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, behaviour contracts and area curfews have been put in place for persistent offenders. Sgt. Canning asked that if residents raise issues with members, they be encouraged to pass information onto the police as this

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helps build up the case for implementing behaviour controls. As these controls are a civil, not criminal matter, then informant's confidentiality can be respected.

Councillor Mrs Bedford said there was some confusion at a Safer Routes to Schools meeting about the penalties for parking enforcement at school entrances. Sgt. Canning confirmed that parking on zig zag lines outside schools is an endorsable offence carrying three points and a £60 fine, as is parking on similar markings at road crossings. Parking on school markings is ticketable but non-endorsable. Sergeant Canning will double check and will advise if this information is incorrect.

b: Local Policing Matters and PCSOs

Temporary Chief Superintendent McVie gave an overview on the introduction of PCSOs. Their primary role is to address low-level crime and nuisance, provide a local beat resource and provide day to day support to operations. In Hertfordshire the vision was clear, PCSOs were to be visible, accessible and reduce anti-social behaviour, they were introduced in Hertfordshire in 2003.

PCSOs powers are laid down by the Home Office. There is a standard list of powers that all PCSOs have and a supplementary list, which Chief Constables can choose to implement in their force area. Within Hertfordshire PCSOs operate with the standard powers; the Chief Constable has not invoked any of the supplementary powers. It was also confirmed that vehicle obstruction enforcement was not one of the standard, or supplementary, PCSO powers.

Chief Superintendent McVie believes that the policy and vision within Hertfordshire is correct, in that the primary role of PCSOs should be visibility, reassurance and community liaison, rather than enforcement, so there is "clear water" between the roles of PCSOs and officers. Also, as the PCSOs are embedded within local community policing teams they receive the support and daily management from the managers of those teams.

Councillor Major asked how the PCSOs dealt with some members of the community that treated them with less respect than full officers. The Chief Superintendent said this is where support from their line managers and other officers was important and another reason for them being embedded in community policing teams.

The area policing budget is £30m/pa, PCSO costs are funded from this budget although some authorities provide funding for specific area PCSOs. The Chief Superintendent thought that is something that the Parish Council may like to consider in the future. Councillor Williams advised that the Parish Council did indirectly make a contribution to local policing costs through the low rent offered and revenue lost on the Manor Lodge, which is used as the Abbots Langley Community Police Office.

Reported crimes for the Abbots Langley Area (01/04/2009-31/12/2009) were 700. In Abbots Langley only serious acquisitive crime was 31, burglary 12. There were 40 burglaries in the whole area. Violent crimes were 90, although this includes minor disorder up to grievous bodily harm.

Councillor Miss Young asked about the role of Special Constables. It was confirmed that "Specials" have the same powers as full officers, that they undergo formal and on the job training from a tutor officer. It is planned that two special constables will be starting training with the Abbots Langley team in March and will hopefully be operational by May/June.

Mrs Warman advised that in the Policing Plan for 2010 control of Anti-Social Behaviour is a priority, this has been set following feedback from residents and community groups. In addition, parking obstruction, vehicle offences and rural crime are being given priority. Also within the Policing Pledge there is a commitment to keeping policing teams stable, with officers being in post for at least two years.

Councillor Mrs Bedford asked about abstraction of officers at times such as New Years Eve. The Chief Superintendent said it was his responsibility to manage policing priorities and at times Watford Town Centre attracts up to 18,000 visitors

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so that is going to be a policing priority, but this does not mean that the area is left without policing cover, there is always an intervention car available covering the Abbots Langley area.

Councillor Williams asked about call centre recording. It was advised that the Constabulary's call centre had to operate to Police Inspectorate standards that were audited every three months and that there was a high level of compliance to these standards. It is generally viewed, that in most cases, the Constabulary is getting its call handling right and this is supported by customer feedback.

Mrs Warman supported this view, in the data reviewed by the Police Authority the Constabulary was achieving national standards for call handling and response times and that the technology it uses supports the operators in accurately recording calls and any associated crimes.

Sergeant Canning was asked to advise the Clerk about future local meetings, so these could be publicised through the Parish Council's website and notice boards. Local meetings are becoming increasingly important as the feedback from these meetings is being used to set policing priorities.

The Chief Superintendent advised that policing of the Eric Shepherd unit in Woodside Road was usually handled by the local intervention teams, rather than by the community officers, so its location in the Parish did not adversely affect local policing.

Councillor Emery asked about the possible merger with Bedfordshire Constabulary which has been reported in the press. Mrs Warman said this is obviously a key item for the Police Authority with implications for budgets, deficits created by reduction in Central Government financial support and the unique challenges of different force areas. The Hertfordshire Police Authority is committed to maintaining a high quality of policing for the county and that this should not be compromised by any force mergers.

The Chairman thanked both Chief Superintendent McVie and Mrs Warman for taking the time to discuss these matters with the Parish Council.

514. Minutes of the Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Lay, seconded by Councillor White and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2010, 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.

515. 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 - 13th & 25th January 2010.

Leisure Committee - 20th January 2010.

Finance & Administration Committee - 25th January 2010.

516. Matters Referred from Committees

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Bedford, seconded by Councillor Morton and **RESOLVED** that an Events Working Party should be established to advise the Parish Council and its committees in relation to events arranged and supported by the Parish Council. The Working Party members will be Councillors Mrs Lay, Mrs Bedford, Lay and White and officers as required. The Bookings Officer will arrange the first meeting w/c 22nd February or after. The Working Party will only advise and will not have any delegated powers.

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor Morton and **RESOLVED** that a Trust Management Working Party should be established to advise the Parish Council and its committees in relation to the legal advice received recently on the relationship between the Parish Council and the Henderson Hall Managing Trustees and the legal and operational methods of working that need to be established. The Working Party members will be Councillors Mrs Lay, Mrs

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Bedford, Williams, Finance Officer and the Clerk. The Clerk will arrange the first meeting w/c 22nd February or after. The Working Party will only advise and will not have any delegated powers.

517. Annual Parish Meeting

The format of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 3rd March 2010 will be an introduction by the Chairman of the Council, with an opportunity for residents to raise any questions on the Annual Report or general matters for which the Parish Council has responsibility.

Followed by presentation of grants certificates for 2010/2011 and a discussion led by Councillors Mrs Bedford and Ms. Phipps on creating a "Sustainable Community", including community orchard, eco audit, transition town, etc.

Tables to be grouped, not "top table and theatre" style as in the past. Councillors to spread out around the tables. The Clerk will produce the formal notice for the Chairman to sign and also more informal posters.

It was proposed by Councillor Williams, seconded by Councillor White and **RESOLVED** that the draft Annual Report for 2009/2010 be approved, with delegated authority given to the Clerk to make minor, typographical, grammatical and content corrections.

518. Langleybury Playing Fields - HCC

No update.

519. District and County Council Member Reports

County Councillor Paul Goggins reported that there would not be a rise in County Council tax this year, but £6.3m was being drawn from reserves for weather related road repairs.

The Herefordshire Highways Joint Members Panel will be reporting to the County Council on road gritting during the severe weather and salt bin provision. The Clerk was asked to refer this matter to the Parish Council's Planning and Highways committee, so they could put forward any comments to County Councillor Goggins and Councillor Giles-Medhurst who serve on the panel.

Parish Council members were asked to direct any comments through the Planning and Highways Committee.

County Councillor Goggins locality grants for the current year have been finalised. The latest recipients were Abbots Langley Players (£300), Bedmond Women's Institute (£350) and Ajax FC (£525).

520. Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended the Tough Ten Presentation evening on 22nd January at Breakspeare School. Recipients of awards on the evening were;

Abbots Langley Community Centre - £2000

Friends of West Herts Samaritans - £400

Red Cross - Abbots Langley Branch - £1000

Breakspeare School - £1500

Demand (Disabled Living Equipment) - £400

West Herts Against Crime - £400

St Albans School (Tanzania Project) - £500

The Monday Club (separate sponsorship though Mr Peter Jowsey's colleagues at Renewable Energy Systems.) - £846

521. Clerk's Report

Members noted the Clerk's report.

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522. Monthly Statement of Accounts

It was proposed by Councillor Wyatt and seconded by Councillor Emery and **RESOLVED** that the Statement of Accounts for January 2010 as notified to the Council be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.24 p.m.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____