

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 12th January 2015 at 7:30 pm in the Council Offices, Langley Road, Abbots Langley.

Those Present:

Chairman:	Councillor Jane Lay
Vice Chairman:	Councillor Belinda Phipps
Councillors:	Councillor Sara Bedford Councillor Martin Brooks Councillor Jean Bowman Councillor Derryck Croker Councillor Jeff Hill Councillor Brenda Kersey Councillor David Major Councillor Owen Roe Councillor Keith Williams Councillor John Wyatt
Officers:	Tim Perkins - Clerk to the Council
Police:	Sergeant 1275 Neil Canning

The meeting opened at 7:30 pm.

305. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received, accepted and recorded from Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst and Gloria Keaveny (both unavailable).

306. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jane Lay declared an interest as a committee member of Abbots Langley Gardening Society in agenda item 7, Fees and Charges 2015-2016.

307. Public Participation

None.

308. Hertfordshire Police

- A number of garage break ins in the Furtherfield and Oak Green Area. Also one at the Hunton Park Hotel in Essex Lane. One arrested and enquiries ongoing.
- There was a spike in burglaries in the Tibbs Hill, Upper Highway area in the pre-Christmas twilight hours. Covert and high visibility patrols were increased in the area. Officers also advised residents to install lights on timers to give the appearance properties are occupied.
- A number of minor thefts from vehicles were reported. In most cases residents acknowledged that the vehicles were unlocked.
- Ten incidents so far of windows being broken in the Kindersley Way, Hazelbury Avenue area. Limited information available, but enquiries are ongoing. Total cost of the damage is in excess of £5,000.
- Officers are giving on-going attention to pavement parking.
- Dacorum Borough Council have had some success in implementing “no cold calling areas”. Consideration is being given to the possible effectiveness of similar in this area.

Councillor Keith Williams advised that agreement had been reached with Hertfordshire County Council to install CCTV in the area of the shops on School Mead, which has been an anti-social behaviour “hot spot”. Officers would have timely access to images which would allow complaints to be quickly followed up.

309. Minutes of the Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Brooks, seconded by Councillor Derryck Croker and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2014, 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.

310. 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 - 19th November, 3rd & 17th December 2014.

Finance & Administration Committee - 24th November 2014.

Leisure Committee - 10th December 2014.

Members asked if the Planning & Highways Committee had sight of an application for change of use for the shop unit in Langley Road, that was being converted from a barbers to an estate agent. Councillor Sara Bedford advised that the current designation for the unit was A1 (shops, retail, hairdressers, etc.) and that an estate agent was classed as A2 (professional services, mainly for visiting customers). As such temporary change of use from A1 to A2 was permitted, but planning permission will be required after two years.

311. Fees & Charges 2015-2016

Councillor Jane Lay having declared an interest in the following item did not take part in discussions and Councillor Belinda Phipps, Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council, took over the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor John Wyatt, seconded by Councillor Jeff Hill and **RESOLVED** that the schedule of Fees and Charges for Halls, Open Spaces and Sports Facilities, as recommended by the Leisure Committee (min. 294.), be approved.

312. Budget & Precept 2015-2016

a. Budget 2015-2016

It was proposed by Councillor Jeff Hill, seconded by Councillor Sara Bedford and **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council's budget for 2015-2016 be set at £598,764. (Expenditure = £811,774 and Income = £213,010).

All members present were in agreement.

b. Precept 2015-2016

It was proposed by Councillor Jeff Hill, seconded by Derryck Croker and **RESOLVED** that the Precept for 2015-2016 be set at £595,790.

All members present were in agreement.

313. Annual Report 2014-2015

It was proposed by Councillor John Wyatt, seconded by Councillor Jeff Hill and **RESOLVED** that the above be accepted as presented.

Delegated authority was granted to the Clerk to make any minor updates and corrections as required, prior to publication.

314. Calendar of Meetings 2015-2016

It was proposed by Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Brenda Kersey and **RESOLVED** that the above be accepted as presented.

The Finance & Administration Committee will consider possibly reinstating their December meeting to review the budget after the December Leisure Committee meeting and prior to budget approval in January.

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Members considered the report submitted by Councillors Belinda Phipps, Brenda Kersey and John Wyatt. The points below were accepted and the group was asked to reconvene and reconsider the other outstanding items. (Original numbering from report retained.)

- a. Circulate consultations from outside bodies to all councillors as soon as practical after receipt. This will allow members more time to research and consult, and provide comments individually if the consultation calls for that or to hold them for discussion at meeting.
- c. Draft minutes emailed to all members of the Parish Council and relevant committee members as soon as practical after meetings. Feedback from members to the meeting chairman, who will consolidate the feedback and review with the Clerk. This will ensure members are aware of the decisions taken at a meeting sooner than they are under the current minutes circulation arrangements, it will also ensure a “clean” copy of the minutes is adopted and subsequently approved at the relevant meeting. Any issues around the factual content of minutes, which cannot be agreed by the relevant chairman and the Clerk will still have to be resolved through the usual adoption and approval process.
- g. Clerk to investigate a software solution to P&H pdf display problems.
- h. Consider leadership training for members, (like Clerk’s leadership programme) which may come with some mentoring for chairman.

315. Three Rivers District Council - Green Expectations Consultation

It was proposed by Councillor Martin Brooks, seconded by Councillor John Wyatt and **RESOLVED** that the above stands as noted and that members who have comments submit those as individuals.

A vote was requested. Seven members were in favour, three against and two abstained.

316. Department for Communities and Local Government - Parish Polls Consultation

It was proposed by Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Derryck Croker and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should write to the Department of Communities and Local Government supporting the changes proposed in the consultation.

Members asked that consideration be given to a “tiered” approach to the “trigger” for the number of electors demanding a poll, which in the case of this Parish Council would be sixty. This was felt to be too low, given the electorate of this parish was now c. 19,000.

317. District and County Council Member’s Reports

County and District Councillor Sara Bedford

The remedial works to the High Street (between Budgens and St. Lawrence Close), originally scheduled for November, but postponed due to the relevant works team not being booked by Hertfordshire Highways, have been rescheduled for w/c 2nd February.

Works will also be carried out to improve drainage.

Resurfacing works at the bottom end of Toms Lane and drainage improvements are currently scheduled for mid-February.

A drain/gulley cleaner is being hired for a day to address various problems in the area, if members are aware of any blocked drains in their wards they should advise Councillor Sara Bedford.

318. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman has attended the following events.

11th November - Remembrance Service, St Lawrence War Memorial.

12th November - "Abigail's Party" by the Abbots Langley Players, Henderson Hall.

Abbots Langley Parish Council

- 18th November - Attended the AL Forum in Manor House.
- 21st November - Attended the AL Biz High Street carols meeting.
- 4th December - Judged the "Best Dressed Christmas Shop Windows" with Marisa Crewe, High Street.
- 4th December - Christmas Carols and Turning on of Lights, High Street.
- 9th December - Carol Singing, Bedmond Tin Church.
- 10th December - Divine Saviour R.C. Primary School Carol Service.
- 11th December - RAFA Christmas Dinner, Manor House.
- 16th December - Carols and Nine Lessons, Parmiters School
- 17th December - Abbots Langley Carers coffee morning, Methodist Church.
- 17th December - Homestart Christmas coffee morning, Lord Street Watford

319. Clerk's Report

Members noted the following items which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

- Meningitis Fun Day.
- Manor House - Bar access.
- CILCA 2015 - Gail Kiely.
- Road barriers, Abbots Langley School - Petition.
- Christmas and New Year office opening.
- Office Copies.
- Absence from Office.
- Referendum on Precept Increases. (Addendum to report)

320. Monthly Statement of Accounts

It was proposed by Councillor Sara Bedford and seconded by Councillor Derryck Crocker and **RESOLVED** that the Statement of Accounts for November & December 2014 as notified to the Council be approved and published on the Parish Council's website.

321. Exclusion of the Press and Public (Part II)

It was proposed by Councillor Sara Bedford and seconded by Councillor Derryck Crocker and **RESOLVED** that as the following matters related to the terms of a contract into which the Parish Council may be entering and the early stages of a possible legal dispute, the press and public be excluded from the discussion, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972, ss100 & 102.

Abbots Langley Parish Council

322. Abbots Langley Bowls Club

The following statement was proposed by Councillor Keith Williams seconded by Councillor John Wyatt and agreed unanimously by members present:

At the Parish Council meeting on 13th October 2013 the draft terms for a new lease with Abbots Langley Bowls Club were agreed and the Clerk with the Parish Council's solicitors instructed to negotiate a new lease.

At its meeting on 14th July 2014 meeting the Parish Council resolved its disappointment that it had not been able to reach an agreement on a new tenancy. The Parish Council also recorded its keenness that bowls continues to be available to Parishioners and re-offered the agreement on the terms of 13th October 2013 meeting.

The Council further requested that discussions were opened with the Hertfordshire Bowls Development Officer and Three Rivers Sports Development Officer regarding working with the club to continue bowls in the Parish. At the same meeting the Council also resolved:-

"In order to protect the Parish Council's position, to align the lease with those in place for other sports club which are tenants of the Parish Council and also to reduce the subsidy from Council Tax payers, as no agreement has been reached, the PC will reluctantly have to ask the Bowls Club to vacate the premises. However in order not to disrupt the current bowls fixtures for the club, its members and their visitors and to enable agreement on the offered terms to be further considered by the club; the PC will defer actual vacation of the green and premises in the ownership of the Parish Council until 1st October 2014."

The Parish Council is disappointed that despite over a year of negotiation and offering extended deadlines, that the Bowls Club and its advisers have not been able to reach agreement with the Parish Council. The Parish Council further notes that despite the long time period taken for these negotiations the Bowls Club has not put in arrangements for the Extraordinary General Meeting it maintains it needs to enter into agreement.

It was proposed by Councillor Keith Williams and seconded by Councillor John Wyatt and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk, with the assistance of the Parish Council solicitors is instructed to undertake the following actions:-

1. Through processes of the court to seek immediate possession of the Bowls Club site, the extent of which is the Parish Council's freehold.
2. To continue to negotiate with the Bowls Club to agree a new tenancy agreement on the terms previously resolved by Parish Council on a "Without Prejudice" basis.

A vote was requested. All members present were in favour.

The Clerk was asked to communicate this decision to the Bowls Club at the earliest opportunity. The Clerk advised that, emergencies aside, he expected to do this the day after this meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.06 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____