

# Abbots Langley Parish Council



## Annual Report 2018-2019

Presented at the Annual Parish Meeting held on  
6th March 2019 at Tanners Wood Hall,  
School Mead, Abbots Langley.

[www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk](http://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk)

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## 1. Parish Council Chairman's Report Councillor Brenda Kersey - Chairman of the Parish Council

In many ways the work of the Chairman of the Parish Council remains that of a Councillor. Personally, I remain a member of three committees and the round of reports, committee meetings and decisions go on, but there are important additions. There are the duties that are governance related, in particular taking the chair at meetings of the Parish Council. I am pleased to say the positive attitudes of our Councillors have made chairing the meetings interesting and satisfying and I thank them for all their help.

Other duties relate to this wonderful place where we live. Abbots Langley stages some big events such as the Carnival, Fireworks, carol singing, Bedmond Summer Fair, the Remembrance Day parades and services, the Tough Ten, the Autumn Fest, the Abbots Langley Festival and many more. There are also numerous smaller events such as fetes, coffee mornings, concerts and meetings of voluntary organisations.

This year serving as Chairman I have seen at closer hand the work that goes on to organise these occasions. A great spirit of collaboration exists between the different parties involved. The Parish Council staff and members, the Watford Lions, the Bedmond Task Force, the churches, the Hub, the Abbots Autumn Fest Committee, the British Legion, the Royal Air Force Association, the Tough Ten Committee, the sponsors, and many more all working together to produce the best possible community events. We are rewarded by excellent attendance figures and favourable feedback from our residents.

We have seen staff changes this year. Some of you will already have met a new face, Jodie, looking after our front desk and bookings, replacing Marisa and Jan, two long-serving members of staff who moved out of the area.

You may also have noticed a new member of our grounds maintenance staff. We have long wished to take on an apprentice as an investment in the future but changing rules and regulations have made it a difficult task. The Clerk, the Facilities Manager and the Works Manager worked together to produce an appropriate package, advertise, shortlist and interview and we are now training a young lady, Jackie, in the many tasks that keep our parks, woodlands, allotments and premises in good shape. Our own workforce supports her on-the-job training while Oaklands College is the academic training provider.

We know from talking to our residents how much they appreciate having a police presence here in Abbots Langley, particularly when we hear of police stations closing elsewhere. Hertfordshire Police are here because of the foresight of the Parish Council in offering them a lease of the Manor Lodge at a low rent. The lease was due for renewal in 2018 and we are delighted that the police have renewed their lease for a further five years. This should help the parish maintain its position as one of the most crime-free places in Hertfordshire.

We face challenges in the future. Transport issues, the development of Green Belt sites, school provision and health and social services are of great concern to our residents. These are not matters where the decision-making lies with the Parish Council, but wherever we have an advisory role we will listen to local people in formulating our responses to consultations.

My thanks go to all those who have supported me this year, our staff, my fellow councillors, community volunteers and the wonderful people of Abbots Langley Parish.



**2a. Planning & Highways Committee Report**

**Councillor David Major - Chairman of the Planning and Highways Committee**

Very little has changed over the last 12 months with pressure continuing to increase on land for housing development.

Among other bodies the Parish Council remain statutory consultees to planning applications submitted to Three Rivers District Council within the parish boundary, for comments and recommendations based on planning regulations, local knowledge and public reaction. Members have been successful in trying to protect the parish from the pressure of urban sprawl and unacceptable infill development; nevertheless, there have been some disappointments, generally due to planning law or a successful appeal decision made by a government appointed inspector, which has included the removal of protected greenbelt land from the register. Nevertheless, I do feel Abbots Langley and Bedmond have retained their community and village atmosphere, despite enormous pressure for further development and also successive Government's "Presumption in favour of Development".

Relaxation of the need for full planning permission for a single storey rear extension to a property and allowing it as permitted development, has not reduced the committee's workload. There seem to be more than ever two storey side and rear extension applications, also a trend to remove conservatories to allow a more permanent expansion to a property and the ongoing conversions of garages into habitable accommodation, bizarrely including houses on the new local estates. On the other hand, this has been no reason for our assiduous members to disregard the much larger and contentious development sites proposed in the district, these include the recent trend to allow large commercial office blocks to be converted and in some cases demolished, to make way for residential apartments by way of "Permitted Development".

I know that members of this committee are very conscious of the strong public feeling regarding protection and enhancement of this parish. They will continue to relay matters such as the poor condition of the road surface, worn-out road markings, inappropriate housing and commercial development as well as any general neglect of the area, to the respective authorities including this council's own officers and workforce. Hopefully the much overstretched infrastructure will continue to cope with the ever increasing pressures.

**2b. Leisure Committee Report**

**Councillor Jane Lay - Vice-Chairman of the Leisure Committee**

May I start this report in welcoming our new member of the Leisure Committee Cllr David Monk.

We have four allotment sites in our parish with the start of the year in October and several of our plot holders often decide to retire at that time so at the present our Works Manager and office staff are inviting new people to take up plots and hopefully all of the plots will be taken up and in working order. If you would like an allotment now is the time to contact the parish office if you would like one but please keep in mind that working an allotment successfully takes a lot of time and effort. Each allotment site has a representative who attends bi-monthly Leisure meetings and I would like to thank Vince Watts, John Kersey, Rob Stimpson and John Kersey for all their voluntary assistance and time. John, with the help of allotment holders from Primrose Hill, are keeping an eye on the community orchard. Unfortunately, we often have had to replace some of the trees but we do hope that the community will enjoy picking the fruit when established.

We are pleased to inform you that the outside refurbished toilet behind the Manor House pavilion has now been completed. Since the new play area has been built it was noticed that we very urgently needed toilet facilities and this has come in under budget at £45,000. Our only hope is that it will not be vandalised in the future and that members of the public will look after this facility.

We are pleased to see that the new play areas at the Manor House grounds and Bedmond seem to be very successful since refurbishment. We are in the process of looking at some of our other areas in the parish to see how we can improve them. The Parish Council regularly check that all our play equipment is safe but if you find any issues please inform the office.

We are introducing a Code of Conduct for use of the open spaces by organised groups. Sadly, we have had to take this step as a balance is needed to be struck between the public use of the open spaces and business use by large groups which needed to be managed. Our staff had been verbally challenged by some users.

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We are pleased to say that the newly refurbished tennis courts are now open, as well as the addition of a table tennis table. We have finalised the Lease of new tennis club and they will be in operation very soon for members of the public to join. You will be able to join their club to play and learn how to play tennis also the public will have certain hours to play without paying a fee. We do hope that this club will be a successful addition to the Manor House playing fields?

You may have noticed strange looking green post standing outside the Manor House pavilion? We were asked if we could provide a water fountain to save purchasing plastic bottles of water all the time. The added bonus to this is that you can give water to your dog in the bowl at the base, refill your bottle as well as taking a drink of water from the fountain. This has been very popular as we have proof of how many litres of water have been used.

This year a brand new skate/BMX park is going to be erected to the west of the tennis courts in partnership with Three Rivers District Council. Again, youngsters have requested this bigger facility and we have listened and hope that they enjoy using it?

The Watford Lions again organised the very successful carnival in June and the fireworks in November at the Manor House grounds and we appreciate that people come from all over the area to support these. Both of these events bring in a lot of profit and the money is distributed in this area to good causes. Unfortunately, members are getting older and the local Lions organisation need younger people to help with these events as of course these events do not run themselves! If you would like to find out how to give your help please contact Frank Rouse, email: frankrouse@yahoo.com.

The Abbots Langley Tough Ten also use the Manor House grounds to put on their race through the villages in the Parish. All ages and abilities ran on various length courses and again all monies raised goes to local charities. The Tough Ten are always looking for more safety stewards to police the runners, if you are able to help please contact the organisers: <http://tough10.co.uk>.

You may have seen people in purple tee shirts gardening in our village. These are AIMS (Abbots Improvement Group) members and they are out gardening in all weathers looking after various parts of the Parish notably Kitters Green, Millennium Gardens the area around the police station, the Community Centre and planting around the entrance signs to the village. They are working voluntarily and do an excellent job to help the Parish Council making Abbots Langley beautiful and they could always do with more help so if you are interested in finding out more about their work or lending a hand please contact: Laila Namdarkhan on 01923 269388.

On the Millennium Gardens, this is the triangular garden in the middle of the village; you will have spotted a giant mosaic poppy. This was erected here by the Royal British Legion in the autumn to recognise the 100 years anniversaries of the Royal British Legion, the RAF and the Watford Lions in 2018. You will have noticed that several remembrance crosses were put there on Remembrance Sunday last year and it is hoped that people will do so every year to remember.

Sadly, to say two of the defibrillators we erected in the parish were vandalised during the year. We have had to replace or repair them and of course these were missing from the designated places for some time. We hope that nobody died through this thoughtless vandalism as they are placed in boxes for the members of public to use after telephoning the emergency service first; they are not for use to just break in to the boxes to use. We have now installed CCTV in the hope that they will not be taken again.

We are pleased to inform you that we now have an apprentice working with our workforce. This has taken our Clerk many hours working with Oaklands College to organise the necessary course that we need.

We are pleased to have supported Evergreen Football Club in their financial bid with the The Football Foundation.

We are looking forward to completing the new projects which we have budgeted for 2019 such as providing the new skate park, another water fountain station and looking at providing more play equipment in the parish.

Our workforce looks after all our open spaces in the area as well as many other jobs and wish to thank them for their hard work in looking after our open spaces under the Work Manager and Leisure Manager. Recognition should go to the Clerk, the Works Manager, the Leisure Manager and all the office staff for their diligent work on behalf of the residents of the Parish of Abbots Langley.



**2c. Finance & Administration Committee Report**  
**Councillor Hitesh Tailor - Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee**

This committee continues to oversee the effective monitoring of the Council's finances, budget and investments. We provide financial support for many projects which mainly arise from the Leisure Committee, as noted above in their report, as well as other areas of the Council.

The budget net expenditure for 2019-2020 is estimated to be £876,886 and our requirement from the precept is therefore estimated to be £720,500. The balance will be covered from general and earmarked reserves. A family in a Band D property will be asked for an additional £3.19 for the year (around 6p per week). The precept is collected via Council Tax Bills.

The Council has in recent years received clean audits despite the rigorous requirements imposed upon it. I am pleased to report the same for this year and the committee would like to thank the Clerk to the Council Tim Perkins and Finance Officer Gail Kiely for their dedicated work.

The Committee has received requests for financial support through our small grants scheme. Various awards have been throughout the year and these include:

- Abbots Langley Autumnfest
- Abbots Langley Local History Society Elvira Henderson Exhibition
- Abbots Langley Festival
- Abbots Langley Methodist Church
- 1<sup>st</sup> Bedmond Brownies
- Breakspeare Community Pre-School
- Abbots Youth Football (U9 Black)

It has been a pleasure to chair this committee for the first time and I would like to thank members, the Clerk and Finance Officer for their support.

**2d. Staffing Committee Report**  
**Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst - Chairman of the Staffing Committee**

The Staffing Committee usually meets four times a year, with additional meetings if required. The committee considers matters related to the employment of the Parish Council's staff. Significant parts of the committee's meetings are confidential, as they relate to individual members of staff.

The committee continues to work with the Clerk and our advisors on employment related matters, monitoring changes to legislation and the impact these may have on our staff.

**2e. Review Panel Report**  
**Councillor Robin Powell - Chairman of the Review Panel**

This committee's principal role is to review complaints against the services provided by the Parish Council, which have not been resolved through discussion with officers of the Parish Council.

Complaints are reviewed in line with the Parish Council's published complaints policy.

The committee did not meet during the year as no such complaints were received.

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**Councillors**

Councillor	Ward	Email
Councillor Sara Bedford 100 Kindersley Way Abbots Langley WD5 0DQ 01923 270469	Leavesden	<a href="mailto:cllr_sara.bedford@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_sara.bedford@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Jean Bowman 9 Bell Close Bedmond WD5 0QU 01923 270190	Abbots Langley and Bedmond	No email
Councillor Liz Burns 51 Sheriff Way Leavesden WD25 7QS 01923 661533	Leavesden	<a href="mailto:cllr_liz.burns@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_liz.burns@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Lyn Ferguson Railway Arms Cottage Railway Terrace Kings Langley WD4 8JB 07590 577085	Primrose Hill	<a href="mailto:cllr_lyn.ferguson@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_lyn.ferguson@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Brenda Kersey 30 Abbots Road Abbots Langley WD5 0AZ 01923 266954	Abbots Langley and Bedmond	<a href="mailto:cllr_brenda.kersey@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_brenda.kersey@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Jane Lay The Gleanings 31 Marlin Square Abbots Langley WD5 0EG 01923 447281	Abbots Langley and Bedmond	<a href="mailto:cllr_jane.lay@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_jane.lay@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor David Major 10 St Lawrence Close Abbots Langley WD5 0AU 01923 265570	Abbots Langley and Bedmond	<a href="mailto:cllr_david.major@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_david.major@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Stephen Giles- Medhurst 25 Tudor Manor Gardens Garston WD25 9TQ 01923 893661	Leavesden	<a href="mailto:sgm@cix.co.uk">sgm@cix.co.uk</a>

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Councillor	Ward	Email
Councillor Alex Michaels c/o Council Offices Langley Road Abbots Langley WD5 0EJ 07931 554698	Primrose Hill	<a href="mailto:cllr_alex.michaels@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_alex.michaels@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Robin Powell 8 Lapwing Way Abbots Langley WD5 0GG 01923 336770	Leavesden	<a href="mailto:cllr_robin.powell@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_robin.powell@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Hitesh Tailor 42 Westland Close Leavesden WD25 7GH 07949 030222	Leavesden	<a href="mailto:cllr_hitesh.tailor@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_hitesh.tailor@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Owen Roe 31 Lauderdale Road Hunton Bridge Kings Langley WD4 8QA 01923 262257	Abbots Langley West	<a href="#">No email</a>
Councillor Alison Ward 64 Trowley Rise Abbots Langley WD5 0LW 01923 267337	Abbots Langley West	<a href="mailto:cllr_alison.ward@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_alison.ward@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor John Wyatt 122 Tibbs Hill Road Abbots Langley WD5 0LL 07762 135451	Abbots Langley and Bedmond	<a href="mailto:cllr_john.wyatt@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_john.wyatt@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor David Monk 39 Upper Highway Kings Langley WD4 8PP 07703 610930	Hunton Bridge and Langleybury	<a href="mailto:cllr_david.monk@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_david.monk@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>

The Parish Council is made up of fifteen members, fourteen of whom were elected at the ordinary elections held in May and June 2015 and one co-opted to fill a vacancy in July 2018.

Ordinary elections in all wards will be held in May 2019.

Councillor contact details are correct as at February 2019.

Please refer to the Parish Council website [www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk](http://www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk) for any updates.

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**Senior Staff**

Name	Position	Email
Tim Perkins	Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer (Chief Officer of the Council)	<a href="mailto:tim.perkins@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">tim.perkins@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
David Abbott	Facilities Manager	<a href="mailto:david.abbott@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">david.abbott@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Mark Ellis	Works Manager	<a href="mailto:mark.ellis@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">mark.ellis@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Gail Kiely	Finance Officer	<a href="mailto:gail.kiely@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">gail.kiely@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Janet Pearce	Planning & Administration Officer	<a href="mailto:janet.pearce@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">janet.pearce@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>

**Parish Council Offices**

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