

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Council Offices
Langley Road
Abbots Langley
Herts
WD5 0EJ

17th October 2019.

To Members of the Leisure Committee

Councillors Sara Bedford, Jean Bowman, Liz Burns, Jane Lay, Simon Stanley, John Wyatt (Chairman) & Roxanne Yau.

The next meeting of the Leisure Committee will be held at the above address on Wednesday 23rd October 2019 at 7:30 pm when your presence is summoned for the purpose of transacting the business outlined below. The press and public are welcome to attend the meeting.

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive and accept apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.
3. **Public Participation**
To note if any members of the public have requested to speak at this meeting, in accordance with the Parish Council's Public Speaking Arrangements.
4. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on**
21st August 2019.
5. **Reports from Allotments Representatives**
To receive reports from the Allotments Representatives.
6. **Reports from Sports Representatives**
To receive reports from the Sports Representatives.
7. **Budget 2020-2021**
 - i. To consider the latest update of Key Projects. (Key Projects report enclosed and Clerk's report item 1i.)
 - ii. To consider the first revision of the committee pages for the above. (Committee pages from budget book v1 enclosed and Clerk's report item 1ii.)
 - iii. To consider the first draft of Fees & Charges 2020-2021. (Fees & Charges v1 enclosed and Clerk's report item 1iii.)
8. **Abbots Youth Football Club**
To consider a request from the above to site a storage container on the Manor House Playing Fields. (Enclosed plan and layout.)
9. **Memorial Benches**
To consider the report from the Clerk. (Clerk's report item 2.)

10. Updates

To consider updates from the Clerk on the following:

- i. Pollinator Strategy
- ii. Great War Wall
- iii. Spraying Training

(Clerk's report item 3.)

11. Christmas Carols and Lights On

To consider the report from the Clerk. (Clerk's report item 4.)

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Clerk's Report - Leisure Committee - October 2019

1. Budget 2020-2021

i. Key Projects

At this stage members need to be considering what large projects they want to commit to in the new financial year.

Projects that need considering at this meeting are highlighted on the Key Projects report. Following are a couple of updates:

Key Project 13 - South Way Car Park

Earmarked reserve "Car Park Refurbishment" is currently £50,000, members need to decide if a further allocation is made to this reserve. South Way will require a full resurface sometime in the next few years.

Key Project 20 - Depot Surface

Finalisation is delegated to officers (Leisure Committee August 2019 min 133.).

A number of further meetings have been held with the contractors to understand every element of their cost and technical proposals.

The final meeting was concluded this week and the initial contract will be awarded at below the £32,000 limit agreed in the above minute.

Thanks are due to the Facilities Manager and Works Manager for the significant work carried out on this project; they will be able to answer any members questions.

ii. Budget 2020-2021

A health warning, especially for members who have not been through a budget cycle before.

This is v1 of the budget that could have a further six or so revisions, at this stage expect inconsistencies, work in progress and errors. If you have any concerns please shout, but the budget is a development process that has to start somewhere.

In this revision do not spend too much time looking at utility costs. There is the usual issue of direct debit timings and estimated bills on energy and water. These are being worked on and will be updated in a future revision.

iii. Fees & Charges 2020-2021

Sports pitches, leases, allotments and other miscellaneous charges have been increased by around 3%.

We spent a lot of time looking at the individual hall hire rates and whilst there will be inflationary pressures on staff costs and utilities, we are asking members to consider a freeze of hall hire rates for 2020-2021.

Competition for venues in the area is increasing and on the front desk we are losing bookings due to customers finding us "too expensive".

A balance has to be drawn between the hall hire rates and securing bookings for the Manor House, which maintain the profitable bar revenues.

Competing venues do offer different pricing models, some a basic hourly hire rate, plus on top the wages cost for bar staff. We operate a "bundled rate" including staff costs.

If we were to separate staff costs, as we pay staff through the books with add ons such as holiday pay, employers NI and pension contributions included, we will again appear more expensive than other venues, which may use less inclusive methods of remuneration for bar staff.

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It is a balancing act and arguments can be made on both sides.

We will still review the bar price tariff to maintain margins, as well as conduct the usual robust negotiations with drinks suppliers.

Members views are sought.

2. Memorial Benches

The following crosses the boundaries between the responsibilities of the Planning & Highways Committee and this committee, but I am starting here.

We continue to get requests for memorial benches to be located in the parish.

For members information a "Phoenix" bench which is used in the open spaces costs apx. £900 fully installed and a "Stanford" as used in Kitters Green and the High Street £1,360 (2019 prices which will be revised in April 2020).

Kitters Green has a full complement of benches and the Manor House playing fields is also well provisioned.

We are getting requests to put benches in the High Street. This creates further challenges.

Permission would be required from the highways authority, or in some cases from property freeholders, this will take up more staff time. We would also have to use a highways approved contractor to install a bench in a new location on the High Street. This would put the costs of installing a bench up close to £2,000.

Officers view is that the High Street and the Millennium Gardens are already pretty well provisioned with benches.

If not now, at some time in the not too distant future, we will not need any benches in "central" locations. There has been the suggestion of memorial trees, but this as we know from past experience creates other challenges. When trees fail to thrive, the PC is expected to take responsibility.

At least with memorial benches they are to a great extent "install and forget", beyond an occasional jet wash, the current benches are pretty much indestructible.

Members views are sought.

3. Updates

i. Pollinator Strategy

The Works Manager has had some initial discussions with officers at Three Rivers District Council, which were very useful. Councillor Tankard has also done some work on this as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Works Manager is arranging a meeting with Councillor Tankard.

The initial feedback is that this will be a significant piece of work, it will require groundworks to take designated areas back to bare earth, treatment and then plantings. It is clearly not just sowing some wildflower seeds.

(Update: Since the initial discussions Kay FitzGerald, Biodiversity Projects Officer, has left TRDC.)

ii. Great War Wall

Hands up my mistake, we checked the definitive map and the garden at the back of the Police Station is just in the conservation area. Apologies for advising members otherwise at the last meeting.

However, there have been various discussions with the Back to the Front group, members, AIMS and the builder. A review of the possible build and location is ongoing, there may be further information at the meeting.

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iii. Spraying Training

This was mentioned at the last meeting.

The grounds apprentice received appropriate training as part of her course. The Works Team have current certificates, which are not date limited, but best practice advice is that refresher training takes place every five years.

Refresher training is being organised, as is first aid training (one day update) for all staff.

4. Christmas Carols and Lights On

Officers are getting concerned about the escalating costs of staging this event and the diminishing returns from the charity collections.

In the past a number of business were happy to provide equipment and staff without charge, those days are unfortunately gone.

Below are some of the initial costs we are facing.

Detail	Cost	Notes
Electrics	380.00	
Compere and Sound Systems	300.00	
Scaffolders	60.00	Possibly 200.00
Lorry Insurance (use as stage)	200.00	
Lorry Driver	50.00	
TENS	21.00	
Street Collection Licence		tba
Suspension of Parking Bays		tba
Banners	180.00	
Advertising	175.00	
Printing Carols Sheets	150.00	
Fish and Chips (Staff)	40.00	
Sweets for Santa	30.00	
Staff Overtime	570.00	
Total	2,156.00	

Some of the costs are 2018 so may be revised. It also costs £750 for the lights contractor to supervise the switch on, which is included in the Christmas Lights project (7225).

Over the past few years footfall is being stretched along the High Street. St Lawrence Church are now holding a carol service on the same evening and the Hub a market in Henderson Hall.

The event is still seen as an important part of village life, but maybe there is an argument that events should be consolidated, perhaps at the church.

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There is a huge amount of work that goes into organising the event. The above costs only cover those incurred on the day, meetings and planning sessions take up significant amounts of time.

Tim Perkins
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