

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 4th May 2021 at 7.30pm on the Zoom Video and Teleconferencing Platform. ^[1].

Those Present:

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chairman: | Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst |
| Vice-Chairman | Councillor Fran Deschampsneufs |
| Councillors: | Councillor Sara Bedford Councillor Liz Burns Councillor Ruth Clark Councillor Jane Lay Councillor Robin Powell (Past Chairman) Councillor Simon Stanley Councillor John Swallow Councillor Jon Tankard Councillor Roxanne Yau |
| Officers: | Tim Perkins - Chief Officer & Clerk to the Council |
| Police: | Sergeant 1490 Amy Stansbury |

^[1] *Permitting legislation - The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.*

The Past Chairman called members to order and acknowledged the passing of HRH The Prince Philip The Duke of Edinburgh, his dedicated service to the country and his loyal service as the longest serving consort to the Monarch in this country's history.

Members respected one minutes silence in HRH Prince Philips honour.

The meeting opened at 7:37 pm.

1. Election of Chairman

Past Chairman Councillor Robin Powell opened the meeting and asked if there were any nominations for Chairman of the Parish Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Jane Lay, seconded by Councillor Liz Burns and **RESOLVED** that Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst be elected Chairman for the municipal year 2021-2021.

No other nominations were forthcoming. A vote was requested, all members present were in agreement.

The Past Chairman wished the incoming Chairman every success, the newly elected Chairman thanked members for their confidence and on behalf of the Parish Council thanked the Past Chairman, Councillor Robin Powell, for his service and hard work during the past two difficult years.

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the Chairman

The Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and this will be duly countersigned by the Clerk as Proper Officer of the Council.

3. Past District and County Councillor Paul Goggins.

The Chairman advised members that Paul Goggins had passed away the day prior to the meeting.

As a District Councillor (1986-1990 & 1991-2014) and County Councillor (1989-2013) Paul Goggins will be remembered for his dedicated service to the community.

Councillor Sara Bedford also offered her respects particularly to Paul's genuine, thoughtful and principled contribution in his work as a councillor and his representation of the area.

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Paul often reminded colleagues that his break in service as a District Councillor was due to him losing an election by twenty-seven votes, a tight margin even in local polls.

The Chairman asked members to respect a minutes silence to honour the passing of past Councillor Paul Goggins.

4. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received accepted and recorded from Councillors Jean Bowman, David Major and Owen Roe (all unavailable).

5. Public Participation

None.

6. Hertfordshire Police

Sgt Stansbury gave members a brief report on current priorities. Crime stats are up slightly from the low points during the pandemic lockdowns of 2020, but positive outcomes are also up.

Drugs numbers improving, a focus week on knife crime was very successful and will be repeated.

Officers will be pushing the message about locking vehicles, as there has been an increase in theft from unsecured vehicles.

There has been a significant increase in the number of complaints about out of control dogs. Officers have started a "Dog Watch" programme to try and address the problem. Officers were aware of the incident where an uncontrolled dog nearly came to grief in an altercation with the Parish Council's grass cutter.

Sgt Stansbury had to depart for operation duties but asked if members had any specific issues they can always email her.

7. Declarations of Interest

None.

8. Election of Vice Chairman

It was proposed by Councillor Jane Lay, seconded by Councillor Liz Burns and **RESOLVED** that Councillor Fran Deschampsneufs be elected Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2021-2022.

No other nominations were forthcoming. A vote was requested, all members present were in agreement.

9. Appointments to Other Bodies

It was proposed by Councillor Jane Lay, seconded by Councillor Liz Burns and **RESOLVED** that the following members were appointment to serve on outside bodies for the municipal year 2021-2022.

Community Centre Management Committee - Councillors Liz Burns

Joint Committee of Parish Councils - Chairman, Leader and Clerk

Abbots Langley History Society - Councillor Jane Lay

Three Rivers District Council Environmental Forum - Councillor Jon Tankard with Councillor Jane Lay as substitute

Abbots Langley Carnival Committee - Councillor Jane Lay

Evergreen FC Management Committee - Councillor Sara Bedford

Henderson Hall, Managing Trustees Contact - Councillor Jane Lay

Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils Exec. Committee (Councillor Liz Burns not seeking re-election at the end of her four year term of office in July 2021) - Members asked that this be deferred to the July meeting of the Parish Council.

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10. Election of Committees

It was proposed by Councillor Jane Lay Burns, seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst and **RESOLVED** that members be assigned to committees as detailed below:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Planning & Highways Committee (8) | Councillor Jean Bowman Councillor Jane Lay Councillor David Major Councillor Robin Powell Councillor Owen Roe Councillor Jon Tankard Councillor John Wyatt Councillor Roxanne Yau |
| Leisure Committee (9) | Councillor Sara Bedford Councillor Jean Bowman Councillor Liz Burns Councillor Ruth Clark Councillor Jane Lay Councillor Simon Stanley Councillor Jon Tankard Councillor John Wyatt Councillor Roxanne Yau |
| Finance & Admin. Committee (7) | Councillor Sara Bedford Councillor Liz Burns Councillor Fran Deschampsneufs Councillor Jane Lay Councillor Robin Powell Councillor Owen Roe Councillor John Swallow |
| Staffing Committee (6) | Councillor Liz Burns Councillor Ruth Clark Councillor Fran Deschampsneufs Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst Councillor Jane Lay Councillor David Major |
| Review Panel (7) | Councillor Sara Bedford Councillor Jean Bowman Councillor Ruth Clark Councillor David Major Councillor Simon Stanley Councillor John Swallow Councillor Roxanne Yau |

Members were reminded that they can attend any committee meetings, including those on which they are not nominated to serve. They can take part in the meeting but will not have a vote.

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11. Election of Committee Chairman

It was proposed by Councillor Jane Lay Burns, seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst and **RESOLVED** that committee Chairman be appointed as follows:

- Planning & Highways Committee - Councillor Jon Tankard.
- Finance & Administration Committee - Councillor Liz Burns.
- Leisure Committee - Councillor Jane Lay.
- Staffing Committee - Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst.
- Review Panel - Councillor Sara Bedford.

12. Subscriptions and Corporate Memberships

Members noted the report.

13. List of Deeds and Property Records in the Custody of the Council & its Solicitors

Members noted the above reports.

Members noted that the leases to Jacketts Field Allotments and the Youth Connexions Cycle Store had expired and these matters were waiting respectively for Three Rivers District Council and Hertfordshire County Council to resolve.

There were significant delays particularly in Three Rivers District Council property team which the Clerk has had little success in resolving.

14. To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Liz Burns, seconded by Councillor Jane Lay and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2021, 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.

15. Minutes for adoption

The following committee minutes were adopted, approved for publication on the Council's website and passed to the committees for resolution.

- Staffing Committee - 17th March 2021 & 4th April 2021.
- Planning & Highways Committee - 10th & 31st March, 21st April 2021.
- Leisure Committee - 14th April 2021.
- Finance & Administration Committee - 26th April 2021.

16. Parish Council & Committee Meetings 2021-2022

Members noted the failure of the court action challenging HMG's decision not to extend the legislation which permitted virtual meetings.

Members noted the Clerk's report on options and expressed concern about the return to attended meetings, when COVID restrictions were in place until 21st June 2021.

Members discussed possible options and they are detailed below, the Clerk under delegated authority and in discussion with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Leader will finalise arrangements as the changes to COVID restrictions develop.

i. Parish Council

An attended meeting will be required on or around 16th June 2021 to formally approve the Annual Governance and Accounting Return, approval of which is legally a Parish Council responsibility. The meeting will only be brief and could be arranged during the day. Clerk will consult with members nominated above when the accounts have been signed off by the Internal Auditors, hopefully on 25th May 2021.

Members hope the Parish Council scheduled for 12th July 2021 will be the return to attended meetings. This will be subject to restrictions in place at the time. It is expected that Parish Council meetings will be held in Tanners Wood Hall and/or the Manor House, dependant on commercial bookings.

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ii. Planning & Highways Committee

Meetings scheduled for 12th May, 2nd June and 23rd June 2021 will be held virtually and application comments submitted to Three Rivers District Council under the Clerk's delegated authority.

iii. Staffing Committee

Meetings scheduled for 12th May and 2nd June 2021 will be held virtually and actions delegated to the Clerk.

iv. Leisure Committee

Meeting scheduled for 16th June 2021. Decision held over for a few weeks, dependant on items for the agenda, then decide if held virtually or moved to possibly to 21st July 2021 as an attended meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Jane Lay and **RESOLVED** that

- As a temporary measure, to allow for effective decision making, the Clerk as Proper Officer is empowered to take any and all decisions recommended to them by the Parish Council or relevant committee.
- This delegation is in place for six months or until some earlier time that the Parish Council chooses to revoke the delegation.
- This empowerment does not affect the delegations already in place via Standing Orders or Financial Regulations.
- This empowerment excludes any matters required by law to be considered by Council.

17. Annual Parish Meeting

Defer decision to July Parish Council meeting and decide then on restrictions in place.

18. Clerk's Job Title

(Referred from the Staffing Committee min. 365)

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Liz Burns and **RESOLVED** that in future the Clerk's job title be formally referred to as "Chief Officer & Clerk to the Council".

19. Resignation of the Clerk

Members noted the planned retirement of the Clerk on 30th September 2021, with a last working day towards the end of August due to accrued leave.

20. Clerk Appointment Panel

It was proposed by Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Simon Stanley and **RESOLVED** that the following members will form the above panel and with administrative support from the Clerk, take responsibility for managing the recruitment process for a new Clerk.

Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Chairman), Fran Deschampsneufs, Sara Bedford and Roxanne Yau.

21. Past Chairman's Report

The Past Chairman attended the following events.

7th April - AECOM Consultancy virtual event, collecting resident's views on the Neighbourhood Plan.

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22. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Report

Members noted the report.

Mr Peter Warman, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Working Group advised members the next AECOM Consultancy event, for residents of Leavesden Ward, was scheduled to take place on 12th May 2021.

23. District and County Council Member's Reports

District & County Councillor Sara Bedford

- No report

District & County Councillor Stephen Giles Medhurst

- . No report

District Councillor Jon Tankard

- Work on the Biodiversity project is ongoing. Issue with allowing areas to grow wild in the higher public traffic areas is that it does present grounds management challenges, as when work is required levels of dog excrement can make it very unpleasant for staff.

24. Clerk's Report

Members noted:

- Henderson Hub - Service Level Agreement
- Citizens Advice Bureau - Emergency Finds Grant
- Financial Grants 2021-2022

25. Monthly Statement of Accounts

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Liz Burns and **RESOLVED** that the Statement of Accounts for March & April 2021 as notified to the Council be approved and published on the Parish Council's website.

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

It was proposed by Councillor Jane Lay and seconded by Councillor Simon Stanley and **RESOLVED** that as the following matters related to the terms and conditions of Parish Council staff, 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.

27. Appointment of a New Clerk

Members discussed briefly the above it was noted:

- Arrangements for handover would depend on the background of the appointed candidate, but the Clerk was already compiling extensive handover notes.
- Members wanted flexible working arrangements to be considered as part of the appointment, but noted the concerns of the Clerk that as the appointee would be straight into developing the budget an initial period of extended working in the office would probably be needed.

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The meeting closed at 9.01 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____