

# Abbots Langley Parish Council



## Annual Report 2012-2013

Presented at the Annual Parish Meeting held on  
6th March 2013 at Tanners Wood Hall,  
School Mead, Abbots Langley.

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# Abbots Langley Parish Council

Annual Report 2012-2013



## 1. Parish Council Chairman's Report Councillor Keith Williams - Chairman of the Parish Council

It is my pleasure to present to Parishioners Abbots Langley Parish Council's Annual Report for 2012/13.

The Parish Council fulfils a number of functions which can broadly be listed as 3 Ps.

- **Protect** - to protect the environment of Abbots Langley parish and its residents' interests
- **Promote** - to advance Abbots Langley parish as a nice place to live, with a range of diverse activities, facilities and services.
- **Provide** - to enable some activities and services in Abbots Langley parish by providing facilities, for example the Parish Council provides and maintains the majority of the parkland, sports pitches and play facilities in the parish; provides a number of halls for organisations to meet in; provides allotment plots so local residents can 'grow their own', provides views to Three Rivers Council on planning applications and provides grants to local organisations to enable them to assist deliver their services for parishioners.

We have heard a lot about 'Localism' recently; but this is not a new phenomenon; in Abbots Langley parish empowering parishioners to take control of their lives, support their neighbours and look after their neighbourhood has existed for as long as I have been on the Council, and from reading the histories of Abbots Langley, for generations before. The role of the Parish Council is therefore to help residents do this and in the detailed reports of the Committee Chairmen, you will see how we achieved this in 2012/13.

2012/13 has been one of the most successful years with the community taking the lead in so many activities, particularly associated with the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen and the London Olympics and Paralympics. Aided by grants from the Parish Council, the community put on a range of celebratory events; from the giant street party in the High Street organised by the shopkeepers to the Churches festival of music; the Bedmond fun day to local street parties and sports demonstrations by local clubs. Interwoven during that period were the Abbots Langley Festival of Arts and the Carnival run by the Lions, who also ran the fireworks evening, all with grants from the Parish Council or run on council land.

In addition, the normal round of events took place either put on by the parish council, for example the Christmas Carol concert and lights, or carried out in council venues or facilities, such as three local football clubs and two cricket teams playing on parish parks; local arts and theatre productions in Henderson Hall and organisations as diverse as Zumba classes and the Women's Institute to the British Legion, the local history society and even private wedding receptions in our halls through to supporting gardeners (and Beekeepers) at our allotments, and I was particularly pleased this year we were able to add a new allotment site at Primrose Hill.

The Council's future plans include working with the community to provide a community orchard; supporting the trustees of the Henderson Hall and the Henderson Hub Project in their plans to sustain this valuable arts venue in the parish and working with parish volunteers to enhance some of the gardens and community spaces in the parish. And speaking of volunteers, the parish some years ago facilitated with Herts Constabulary the local police office provided in a parish venue and using volunteers on the front desk. Today I congratulate Sgt Neil Canning and his team for winning the Police Volunteer Team of the Year Award and the work they do helping to keep our parish safe.

Running Abbots Langley Parish is a £750,000 business, with all the incumbent problems of bookings, financial management, maintenance, health and safety, and all with tighter budgets. My thanks go to the Parish Councillors for giving their time to oversee these operations on behalf of the community and for also doing so in a financially prudent and innovative way which has required no increase in the council tax in recent years. As I said when I was Finance Chairman in previous years, the Parish Council receives no other income apart from its share of the council tax plus trading income. My thanks also go to the Parish Council staff team who are our public face in operating these facilities and services.

This year as part of the Annual Meeting, I want to showcase the work of our community organisations and they are very welcome here tonight. The organisations represented are just a snapshot of the wide range of organisations operating within our parish. Please take time to speak to the representatives of the organisations, find out what they do, and if something takes your fancy, join the organisation and help make Abbots Langley an even more thriving place. And to the many hundreds of people in our community who give of their time so freely to run these organisations, many thanks. You are the lifeblood of our community and without you Abbots Langley would be a very much poorer place.

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### 2a. Planning & Highways Committee Report

Councillor David Major - Chairman of the Planning and Highways Committee (from March 2013)

Councillor Ivy Young - Chairman of the Planning and Highways Committee (to February 2013)

The first part of this report is to convey the tragedy which has befallen our committee to Chairman Cllr Ivy Young who died in February after suffering a severe stroke. Ivy had been on the Planning and Highways Committee for most of her career and Chairman for most of them and we will all miss her greatly. Her involvement in village affairs spans a number of years serving local organisations including ward member of Leavesden and was very conscientious and thorough in her work and could always be found in the Parish office looking at plans for the next meetings and was particularly known for her activities in fund raising for the Royal British Legion and she will be a hard act to follow and replace.

The Planning and Highways meet on a regular basis twice a month during the year to attend a fairly full agenda comprising planning applications from Three Rivers District Council and Herts. County Council and all of these can have direct effect on our Parish. These issues are discussed fully and plans are carefully vetted and our deliberations are forwarded to the appropriate authority. The majority of our decisions prove to be in accordance with our Councillor colleagues at Three Rivers District Council with a few to the contrary. The opportunity to attend these meetings which are held in our parish chambers are always open to the general public but which is unfortunately not taken advantage of very often.

#### Local Framework Development

This particular issue has been a long term issue and has to a number of us caused concern to the parishioners as to the rapid erosion of the surrounding areas of the parish and the importance of the village life. Alas the local and national needs have been a deciding factor in these decisions! As a long term resident and Councillor I have viewed with concern the constant and continued targeting of the parish for new housing. Large developments shortly after the Second World War were to see some dramatic changes and population of the village, the Hillside Estate was to provide the overspill of Watford, along with Cecil Lodge, Manor House and Jacketts Field and more recently the development of the Leavesden Hospital land. These developments of course are well established and their impact felt mostly through the road infrastructure especially with one of the busiest roads passing through Abbots Langley from Hemel Hempstead industrial site to Watford. With the commencement of the huge developments on the Bellway Homes site is well under way and the prospect of the increased volume of traffic using these roads could prove a problem, especially at critical times of the day early morning and at the end of the day, that issue being one I would like to be proved wrong.

#### Neighbourhood Development

Although plans for developing a neighbourhood plan for the parish it is at present considered that the current arrangements are satisfactory, but it is fair to say that some areas within and around the village have indicated interest in redeveloping of their land.

In conclusion may I thank the committee for their continued commitment and regular attention to matters concerning the parish and its interests and to Janet Pearce for her commitment and advice on planning matters.

Report prepared by Councillor Leon G Lay, Vice-Chairman of the Planning & Highways Committee.

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### 2b. Leisure Committee Report

Councillor Jane Lay - Chairman of the Leisure Committee

We had another busy and interesting year in the Leisure Committee calendar. We are different from other parishes in the Three Rivers District Council area as our committee deals with all the local green spaces and have 5 playing fields, 7 children's play areas, 4 allotment sites, 4 council halls (one is the Abbots Langley Police Station) and various manorial waste areas under our care.

I am sad to report that we have lost one of our committee, Cllr Ivy Young who died at the beginning of February. She had been on the Leisure Committee most of her parish council life and we shall miss her input greatly. One of her pleasures was to watch Abbots Langley Cricket Club down on the Manor House at weekends and she was also a Vice President of the club.

We were asked to support many organisations that put on events to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and we were very pleased to support the Bedmond Task Force committee which asked us for permission to hold a large party and the lighting of a big beacon on the Bedmond Sports field.

We are pleased to report that the Primrose Hill Allotments site is now complete, paid for out of the £73,000 Section 106 money available from the building work at the Ovaltine and 27 out of the 28 plots are now in use. These allotments were put in place for those residents living in that area and we are pleased that the local Kings Langley Scouts Group has also taken a plot for no charge to encourage youngsters to show interest in growing their own fruit and vegetables. The waiting list has now been reduced for all our sites and hopefully most of the residents on the list are now booked into one of our sites. May I thank Chris Bromwich, Sally Sanderson and Vince Watts for taking on the job of Allotment Representatives who are the go-between from the plot holders to the Council and we look forward eventually to welcome a Representative from Primrose Hill who will also liaise between the plot holders and the Parish Council.

We have agreed in principle to have a community orchard on part of the Primrose Hill playing fields at a cost of around £250 also from the Section 106 money with a contribution from Warner Brothers. The Parish Council are not able to manage this and put out a request for interested parties to organise the designing, purchasing, planting, pruning and upkeep of the fruit trees and we are in the process of having meetings with those people to see what plans they propose. Several ideas have come forward and as well as planting fruit trees it has been suggested to have benches and wild flowers amongst the trees which could make it a very lovely place to relax and "chill out"! The trees will be planted around the allotments site so as not to take up too much of the playing fields but unfortunately the moles are still alive and digging so a lot of the field is not available and safe for sport so more space may be made available for the fruit trees. In the last week a meeting was held when it was decided to postpone the planting until the autumn to make sure that we have the correct trees and plan for cross pollination.

There is a path running from the Primrose Hill Road, along the west side of the playing field to the canal bridge leading to Kings Langley village. As this is part of our responsibility we will be putting in eight lampposts with low level energy lights to enable resident to see their way in the dark. The cost of this is approximately £8,000 and we are very pleased to have confirmed from TRDC that this project will also be paid for out of the Section 106 money.

Tanners Wood Hall has been very popular since it opened and hired out to many different people and organisations, such as Zumba and now two activity classes for the over 50's have commenced with dance classes on Monday mornings and keep fit classes on Tuesday mornings.

You remember from my report last year, we were planning to employ an apprentice in 2012 but this did not come to fruition but I am pleased to report that we are still planning to employ a school leaver to join our workforce to learn the practical side of the job and go to day release college.

We were lucky to have another two of our children's play areas refurbished with Section 106 money from Warner Brothers and £40,000 funding from the Watford Housing Trust. The South Way play area is so exciting with the addition of sand, ropes, climbing frames, slide, etc. all chosen by the local children and during the summer holidays was very popular with all children. The play area at Langleybury was also refurbished at the same time with wonderful timber climbing equipment.

We would like to do something similar to upgrade the Manor House play area and this is down to the Parish Council and could cost over a hundred thousand pounds to really make it an exciting place for children to use. Every time I go with my grandchildren to the play area I am always getting Mums and Dads saying that we need to update this area, but it all takes money, money we do not have especially when we have not been allowed to increase the precept for the last two years due to the recession. We have applied for a Grant from TRDC but I expect the Parish Council will also have to find funding to match this. Why the other

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play areas have been refurbished before Manor House is due to Section 106 money being given from large building projects in those parts of the parish so it has cost TRDC and our Parish Council nothing even though it cost many hundreds of pounds. Be assured that we will hold a consultation period for residents and children to give their ideas during the year of what they would like to have included. We have also put in a request that the TRDC Local Strategic Partnership will upgrade the very popular skate park and we were very grateful to a local young man and his friends for giving us ideas they would like for this project. Unfortunately funding is tight so we may have to wait a year or two before anything can be added to this project.

We are constantly upgrading our Manor House Jubilee Room and during last year we had to put in a new fire alarm system with firewall, and after our Eco Audit the recommendation was that we should replace the 1977 legacy lighting with a low energy system. This is budgeted to cost around £6,000 and I am sure that those of you who have been in the hall has stated that the lighting was not satisfactory and made the hall dark for meetings, but ideal for parties.

On the south side of the Manor House car park it is excessively muddy from the quantity of cars parking daily on the grass between the trees. We are putting grasscrete or a similar solution to prevent further erosion and plan to complete this during the year. You may also have noticed that we are replacing the fencing around some of our car parks in the area and this is due to the old posts gradually rotting in the ground and being pushed over by cars. The high chain link boundary fence along Meadow Way in Bedmond has also come to the end of life and has had to be replaced to prevent footballs damaging the properties and cars.

We had planned to put up a new flag pole in the Millennium Gardens ready for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations but we had problems getting permission and this will be erected in the summer. We agreed to put a silver birch tree rather than oak trees in all the playing fields to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee and these were planted during the autumn and I am sure we will all enjoy watching them grow to mature trees.

Councillors are trying to pre-empt the problem on Kitters Green where cars were seen parked on the Green and grass verges over past summers. I am sure you will agree that we want to preserve this area which is an area of beauty and conservation for the village so protection is paramount. The fencing which we started putting up is not suitable and ugly and we have been speaking to residents on how we can work together so that we can give protection and a pleasant visual effect.

I would like to thank the Watford Lions for putting Abbots Langley on the local map again in organising another successful carnival in June and firework night in November and the Parish Council staff laying on our yearly Christmas Carol Concert, also Adam Ginder on behalf M.K. Ginder's supporting all three selling hot food and giving the profits to charity.

I hope you have found this report interesting and I would like to thank other Representatives for sport, Keith Gissing and Ron Smith and for halls Peter Warman in attending our meetings, Councillors, the Clerk Tim Perkins, David Abbott, Mark Ellis, the office staff and the work force who have had to work out in the terrible weather conditions we have had in the last months for all their assistance..

### **2c. Finance & Administration Committee Report**

**Councillor Sara Bedford - Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee**

Abbots Langley Parish Council is one of the largest Parish Councils in England, both in terms of the services it provides to residents and in terms of its expenditure. The responsibilities of Finance and Administration Committee include the strategic monitoring of the Council's finances, budget and investments, together with overseeing the effective use of the Council's assets and other administrative matters.

The financial year 2012/13 has yet to end and the final figures will not be available for a few weeks. However the Committee has monitored budgetary performance throughout the year and expect the final results to be in line with our agreed and published budget.

For the past few years, the Parish Council has received a clean audit from our external auditors, BDO Stoy Hayward, in all areas except for the operational relationship that exists between the Parish Council as Custodian Trustee for Henderson Hall and the appointed Trustees of Henderson Hall. This arose after a change in the way that such relationships were audited. The detailed work required to address this was completed in time for the start of the 2012/13 financial year and the Council is now optimistic that we shall receive a clean report for 2012/13.

The Parish Council's revenue budget for 2013/14 is £768,865. The Council is budgeting for an income in 2013/14 of £201,645 from trading, mainly the hire of facilities and bars, and £564,000 raised through the

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precept, which is collected in Council Tax bills on behalf of the Parish Council by Three Rivers District Council. This is the same amount as for 2012/13.

From 2013/14, there will be a change in the way the council tax base is calculated. This is not of the Parish Council's choosing and will mean an effective reduction in the amount of precept collected per house, without any commensurate reduction in the amount paid by the household. The result is that the amount of Council Tax paid by the average household will increase by less than 10 pence per week over the coming year. In partial compensation for the change in calculation methods, the Council has been given a one-off grant of £53,703 by Three Rivers, However as this grant will not recur in future years, the Council has decided to put this sum into a fund for the redevelopment of the play area at the Manor House, something we have wanted to do for many years.

As many residents are aware, Parish Councils do not receive any income from central Government grants, nor any income from local business rates - the only income Parish Councils receive is from council tax paid by local residents and a small amount from trading activities, including from hall hire and sports grounds.

The Committee also administers the Council's grants' allocation scheme. This year, £14,000 was allocated for grants, of which £2,000 has been placed in a separate fund for small grants of up to £250 to be allocated during the year. The procedure for this has just been agreed and will be available on the Council's web site and from the office.

The following organisations will receive financial support from the Council's financial grants program in 2012/13:-

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Royal British Legion                      | £250 to support meeting costs.  |
| 2. Abbots Langley Gardening Society          | £200 towards equipment to encourage bee keeping.                              |
| 3. Bedmond Women's Institute                 | £200 to support meeting costs.  |
| 4. Abbots Youth Football Club                | £600 towards the hire of training pitches.                                    |
| 5. Abbots Langley Local History Society      | £300 to support meeting costs.  |
| 6. St. Lawrence Church                       | £1,500 towards the cost of the upkeep of the churchyard.                      |
| 7. Lions Club of Watford                     | £2,000 towards the costs of the Abbots Langley Carnival and Firework Display. |
| 8. Abbots Langley Gilbert & Sullivan Society | £1,000 towards the costs of staging productions.                              |
| 9. Abbots Langley Women's Institute          | £200 to support meeting costs.  |
| 10. Abbots Langley Players                   | £350 to support the costs of staging productions.                             |
| 11. St. Paul's Church                        | £1,500 towards the cost of the upkeep of the churchyard.                      |
| 12. Abbots Langley Cricket Club              | £500 towards the costs of maintaining the cricket square.                     |
| 13. Langleybury Cricket Club                 | £500 towards the costs of maintaining the cricket square.                     |
| 14. Abbots Improvement Group                 | £350 for start-up costs (pending confirmation of operational arrangements).   |
| 15. Citizens Advice Bureau                   | £2,000 for a home visiting case worker in Abbots Langley.                     |
| 16. Bedmond Village Task Force               | £250 towards the costs of the Bedmond Village Day.                            |

This is my first year as Chair of the Finance and Administration committee. I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for their attention to detail, the Clerk to the Council Tim Perkins for his assistance and especially our Finance Officer Caroline Byrne for her knowledge and infinite patience.



**2d. Staffing Committee Report**  
**Councillor Belinda Phipps - Chairman of the Staffing Committee**

The Staffing Committee meets as required to consider 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.

During the year the professional support to advise the Parish Council on matters relating to employment, health and safety legislation and risk management was reviewed and new advisers appointed.

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 Stephen Giles-Medhurst - 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	Bedmond	No email
Councillor Derryck Croker 196 Coates Way Garston WD25 9PE 01923 673719	Leavesden	<a href="mailto:cllr_derryck.croker@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_derryck.croker@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Samantha Heilling 16 Primrose Hill Kings Langley WD4 8HY 01923 261058	Primrose Hill	<a href="mailto:cllr_samantha.heilling@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_samantha.heilling@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Jeff Hill 61 Summerhouse Way Abbots Langley WD5 0DX 01923 263184	Leavesden	<a href="mailto:cllr_jeff.hill@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_jeff.hill@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Gloria Keaveny 45 Hazelbury Avenue Abbots Langley WD5 0DE 01923 267595	Tanners Wood	<a href="mailto:cllr_gloria.keaveny@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_gloria.keaveny@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Mrs Jane Lay The Gleanings 31 Marlin Square Abbots Langley WD5 0EG 01923 447281	Abbots Langley	<a href="mailto:cllr_jane.lay@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_jane.lay@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Leon Lay The Gleanings 31 Marlin Square Abbots Langley WD5 0EG 01923 447281	Abbots Langley	<a href="mailto:cllr_leon.lay@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_leon.lay@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor David Major 10 St Lawrence Close Abbots Langley WD5 0AU 01923 265570	Abbots Langley	<a href="mailto:cllr_david.major@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cllr_david.major@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>

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Councillor Ms Belinda Phipps 30 Gypsy Lane Hunton Bridge Kings Langley WD4 8PR 01923 260905	Hunton Bridge and Langleybury	<a href="mailto:cldr_belinda.phipps@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cldr_belinda.phipps@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Owen Roe 31 Lauderdale Road Hunton Bridge Kings Langley WD4 8QA 01923 262257	Tanners Wood	No email
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>
Councillor Keith Williams 4 Furtherfield Abbots Langley WD5 0PL 01923 268873	Tanners Wood	<a href="mailto:cldr_keith.williams@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cldr_keith.williams@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor John Wyatt 122 Tibbs Hill Road Abbots Langley WD5 0LL 07762 135451	Abbots Langley	<a href="mailto:cldr_john.wyatt@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">cldr_john.wyatt@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>

The Parish Council is made up of fifteen members, all of whom were elected at the ordinary elections held in May 2011 or in subsequent by-elections.

Councillor Ivy Young died at the beginning of February 2013, the arrangements to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council, in Leavesden ward, will be published in due course.

Councillor contact details are correct as at February 2013.

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 (Senior 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>
Caroline Byrne	Finance Officer	<a href="mailto:caroline.byrne@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk">caroline.byrne@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk</a>

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