

Abbots Langley Parish Council



Annual Report

2014-2015

Presented at the Annual Parish Meeting held on
5th March 2015 at Tanners Wood Hall,
School Mead, Abbots Langley.

www.abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk

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1. Parish Council Chairman's Report Councillor Jane Lay - Chairman of the Parish Council

In May of last year I was given the honour of being elected Chairman of the Abbots Langley Parish Council for the second time, the last time in 1989 although I have been a Councillor for most of that time.

My year has been exciting and refreshing visiting many organisations in the parish on behalf of the Council. I have met lots of new, as well as familiar people on my journey; I have visited Parmiters School to witness many of their talented students being given awards; several fetes and fairs; annual general meetings; carol singing; coffee mornings as well as many others.

Being the centenary of the start of World War 1 on 4th August 2014 I attended several events to commemorate this historic event; the Kings Langley Parish Council together with our Back to the Front committee held a beautiful and sentimental evening event held in the Kings Langley garden. Some 700 residents of both councils attended and it was so wonderful when we all walked into the cemetery with our candles alight to stand around the war memorial and to lay wreaths. St Lawrence's Church held a beautiful service in commemoration as well and Abbots Langley Back to the Front committee with the help of the Parish Council has installed a notice board by the war memorial to recognise those who died 100 years ago. You may have heard the church bell toll 100 times to recognise this. I also attended the anniversary of the end of the Second World War and this was recognised in the Baptist Church with memories rather than a church service.

I judged the floats and opened our Carnival held in June as well as the Firework countdown event in November. I feel we must thank the Watford Lions who organise both events together with our wonderful workforce. I also must thank our workforce for the work they put in to prepare the site for our wonderful carols in the High Street and to ALBIZ (the newly formed Abbots Langley Chamber of Commerce) for entering into the spirit of Christmas with the opening of the local shops and taking part. This year I reinstated the Christmas Shop Window Competition and am delighted to say that the two judges agreed that the Hospice of St Francis shop was the winner, second the Post Office and third Beautiful You. If this is held next year by the new Chairman I hope that more than eight shops take part.

My charity this year is for the provision of defibrillators to be installed around our Parish. The parish Council installed the first two and I am so thankful to local clubs organisations and residents in providing money for several more. At the carols we received a record sum of £627 in donations. Thank you all so much for your generosity. If your local organisation would like to donate some money towards this very important fund please let me know, every little helps as each one costs up to £1,500 to install, I only hope that no one will need to use them but one of them could save your life when needed. I understand the Parish Council will run an evening for those interested in how to use them but once the 999 call goes out to the ambulance organisation and they give you the code to open the case, you remove the box and once switched on tells you exactly what to do, and you cannot kill anyone using it.

For 2015 the Council will be looking into compiling the Neighbourhood Plan and tonight we have two experts on this who will talk to us and hopefully a few of you will be interested enough to join the Councillors bringing this to fruition.

I am sure John Wyatt will be mentioning these but I am pleased to inform you that the Manor House proposed refurbishment of the play area is getting nearer and we and Three River DC will be going out to consultation before 2016 to see what you and your children would like to have in the play area. I am also pleased to tell you that over the next few years you will see us doing work on trees and vegetation in conjunction with the Countryside Management Service. This work will help to preserve the health of our trees on the Manor House for many years to come but trees do need to be managed otherwise they could die due to viruses, lack of moisture or even rot making them unsafe.

May I thank all the Councillors for their work on our Council committees who have been working very hard this year and a big thank you should go to the Clerk to the Parish Council, Tim Perkins for keeping us all on the right side of the law as well as his hard working staff in the office and work force staff.



2a. Planning & Highways Committee Report
Councillor David Major - Chairman of the Planning and Highways Committee

Fortunately, the Parish Council remain statutory consultees for 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 worked hard and had some success 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. However I do feel Abbots Langley has retained its community and village atmosphere despite enormous pressure for further development.

Temporary relaxation of the requirement for full planning permission for a single story rear extension to properties and allowing them as permitted development has not reduced the committee's workload, there seem to be more than ever two storey side and rear application permissions, plus conversions of garages into habitable accommodation being sought, not forgetting the larger development sites in the district.

I know that members of this committee are very conscious of the strong public feeling regarding protection and enhancement of this parish. The committee will continue to relay matters such as the poor condition of the road surface, inappropriate housing and commercial development, including any general neglect of the area, to the respective authorities, including this council's own workforce, for action to be taken.

2b. Leisure Committee Report
Councillor John Wyatt - Chairman of the Leisure Committee

The community orchard and allotments at Primrose Hill are now established and well used. Only two of the fruit trees in the community orchard did not thrive and were replaced at the beginning of this year.

We have had some vandalism to the allotment fence so we have had to repair a number of panels and cut back more bushes from one corner of the allotments to try to reduce further damage. The police have been asked to give the area more attention.

The condition of the fence between the Happy Valley Industrial Estate and the Primrose Hill recreation grounds is giving cause for concern. The fence is owned by the freeholder of the industrial estate, we are working with Three Rivers District Council in an effort to get the landlord to take remedial action.

We have now completed the tree risk assessments for all the council owned land in the parish, two trees were immediately removed at Love Lane play area, remedial works are scheduled on some trees and all other risks will be addressed by the end of March.

We have spoken to Herts County Council's Countryside Management Service about a management plan for the new English Wood at the back of the Manor House playing fields. Hopefully this year we will be thinning out the trees to allow more light to the under story and more space for the better specimens to grow.

Please. If you do not want to clear up after your dog do not walk them in the public parks. We have a constant fear that a local child will catch Toxicara and go blind. We make it as easy as we can by keeping poop bags in the council offices and supplying poop bins in our parks.

We hope that by early in the new financial year (April 2015) we will have put in place an answer to the parking problem at the Manor House car park. The problem has been local workers leaving their cars in the car park all day thus stopping users of the Manor House playing fields and pavilion being able to park there. We hope that by the use of a free ticket system we can cure this years old problem.

The refurbishment of the Manor House play area should hopefully be happening in 2016-2017. We have managed to put more money aside and hope to put more away next year. The consultation with the public has not happened yet but hopefully Three Rivers District Council will be starting that this year.

The footpath through the middle of the Kingsfield allotment has been replaced and will hopefully last many years.

We had hoped to give some attention to the patio area around the Manor House but that is still at the planning stage. We hope to extend the patio area and perhaps partially cover it to make it more usable for more of the year.

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The car park at Primrose Hill has been resurfaced but still suffers from people parking there all day to walk to the railway station and local businesses. We will be looking at restricting the parking here after we see how the Manor House parking scheme works out.

We have started to replace all council owned benches in our parks. They will be replaced with more robust benches made largely from recycled materials.

We have now installed two Community Public Access Defibrillators (cPads) in the village on Henderson Hall and the Manor House. By the time of this meeting we hope that cPads will be installed on Tanners Wood Hall, funded jointly by the Watford Lions and the Hillside Residents Association. Further sites at Katherine Place, Bedmond and Hunton Bridge are being investigated. Generous donations towards the installation of cPads have been received from, or promised by, Abbots Youth Football Club, Abbots Langley Cricket Club, the Tough Ten and the Village Moonlighters. £627 was raised at the annual Carol Concert which will be used to fund the cPad project.

The Watford Lions again did a wonderful job of arranging the carnival in June and the fireworks in November but could always do with some extra help. If you would like to find out more about the Lions please contact Allen Harvey, email him on allen@watfordlions.co.uk. All monies raised by the Lions go to local charities

I am very pleased that The Abbots Langley Tough Ten put their race on again through the village. All ages and abilities run on various length courses and again all monies raised go 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/>

AIMs (Abbots Improvement Group) are still out there in all weathers looking after various parts of the parish notably Kitters Green, Millennium Gardens and the area around the police station. If you are interested in finding out more about their work or lending a hand please contact Laila Namdarkhan on 01923 269388.

This committee still rely heavily on local representatives to report on the allotments, halls and sports clubs in the parish, we would like to thank them and the recently outgoing reps.

This committee has the biggest turnover on the parish and so takes up a lot of the time of Tim Perkins our Clerk, David Abbott our Facilities Manager, Mark Ellis our Works Manager. The ground staff that keep the parish owned grounds up to scratch and the office staff that keep the rest of us on our toes. My thanks to them all.

2c. Finance & Administration Committee Report

Councillor Jeff Hill - Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee

The remit of the Finance & Administration Committee includes the effective monitoring of the Council's budget, finances, assets and investments.

As the financial year has not quite yet come to an end, the final outcome will not be available until the end of March, but the concluding figures should be in line with our budget forecast. Once again it has been a tough year, but with prudent administration by all concerned we can once again produce a well-balanced set of accounts. To this end I would like to thank the Clerk to the Council, Tim Perkins, Gail Kiely our Finance Officer, Gloria Keaveny the Vice Chairman and the rest of the Committee.

The Parish Council has had a clean bill of health from our external auditors and our internal audit has also been creditably signed off, again thanks to Gail and also David Abbott for the work he puts in to the financial controls.

The Parish Council's revenue budget for the year 2015-2016 will be £811,774. The Council is budgeting for an income in 2015-2016 of £213,010, which comes mainly from the hire of facilities and bar receipts. The amount raised through the precept this year will be £595,765. This is collected via Council Tax Bills on behalf of the Parish Council by Three Rivers District Council. The result for the year 2015-2016 means that there will be no increase in the amount residents pay within the Council Tax for Abbots Langley Parish Council.

The Finance Committee is responsible for the grants allocation scheme. This year the amount allocated will be £14,000 in total, of which £3,000 of this money will be for small grants of up to £250. These small grants will be allocated during the 2015-2016 financial year as and when requested and approved by the Committee.

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The following organisations have requested grants for 2015-2016:-

- Lions Club of Watford
- Abbots Langley Gilbert & Sullivan Soc.
- St. Lawrence Church
- Abbots Langley Carers Network
- Royal Air Force Association
- Abbots Langley Women's Institute
- Abbots Langley Flower Arrangement Society
- CAB in Three Rivers
- Abbots Langley Players
- St. Paul's Church Langleybury
- Bedmond Women's Institute
- Evergreen Football Club

Grant cheques and certificates will be presented at the Annual Parish Meeting. Which will be held on 7th March 2015 in Tanners Wood Hall.

The amount of applications exceeds the budgeted amount available, so some difficult decisions will be required by the Council when awarding these grants.

In 2014-2015 Small Grants have been awarded to the following organisations:-

• Back to the Front	£250.00
• Royal British Legion - Abbots Langley Branch	£120.00
• Abbots Langley Orchestra	£150.00
• Hillside Residents Association	£150.00
• Abbots Langley Arts Group	£250.00
• DEMAND	£250.00
• Abbots Langley Biz	£200.00
• Village Moonlighters	£200.00

The funds available for small grants was fully expended in 2014-2015 and application will reopen on 1st April 2015 at the start of the new financial year.

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.

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	cllr_sara.bedford@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor Jean Bowman 9 Bell Close Bedmond WD5 0QU 01923 270190	Bedmond	No email
Councillor Martin Brooks 17 Margaret Close Abbots Langley WD5 0NN 07896 787261	Leavesden	cllr_martin.brooks@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor Derryck Croker 196 Coates Way Garston WD25 9PE 01923 673719	Leavesden	cllr_derryck.croker@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor Jeff Hill 61 Summerhouse Way Abbots Langley WD5 0DX 01923 263184	Leavesden	cllr_jeff.hill@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor Gloria Keaveny 45 Hazelbury Avenue Abbots Langley WD5 0DE 01923 267595	Tanners Wood	cllr_gloria.keaveny@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor Brenda Kersey 30 Abbots Road Abbots Langley WD5 0AZ 01923 266954	Abbots Langley	cllr_brenda.kersey@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor Angela Laval 61 Toms Lane Kings Langley WD4 8LB 01923 291766	Primrose Hill	cllr_angela.laval@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor Mrs Jane Lay The Gleanings 31 Marlin Square Abbots Langley WD5 0EG 01923 447281	Abbots Langley	cllr_jane.lay@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor David Major 10 St Lawrence Close Abbots Langley WD5 0AU 01923 265570	Abbots Langley	cllr_david.major@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk

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Councillor Ms Belinda Phipps 30 Gypsy Lane Hunton Bridge Kings Langley WD4 8PR 01923 260905	Hunton Bridge and Langleybury	cllr_belinda.phipps@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
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	sgm@cix.co.uk
Councillor Keith Williams 4 Furtherfield Abbots Langley WD5 0PL 01923 268873	Tanners Wood	cllr_keith.williams@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Councillor John Wyatt 122 Tibbs Hill Road Abbots Langley WD5 0LL 07762 135451	Abbots Langley	cllr_john.wyatt@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk

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. Full Parish Council elections will be held on Thursday 7th May 2015.

Councillor contact details are correct as at February 2015.

Please refer to the Parish Council website 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)	tim.perkins@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
David Abbott	Facilities Manager	david.abbott@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Mark Ellis	Works Manager	mark.ellis@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk
Gail Kiely	Finance Officer	gail.kiely@abbotslangley-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council Offices

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