

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Council Offices
Langley Road
Abbots Langley
Herts
WD5 0EJ

5th March 2019.

To Members of the Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at the above address on Monday 11th March 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. **Hertfordshire Police**
To receive a report from the Police (if present).
5. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th January 2019.**
6. **Minutes for adoption**
To adopt the following minutes and approve publication on the Parish Council's website.
 - Planning & Highways Committee -9th January, 30th January & 20th February 2019
 - Finance & Administration Committee - 21st January 2019
 - Leisure Committee - 13th February 2019
7. **Planning and Highways Committee**
To consider the future role of the above. (Clerk's report item 1)
As the above may discuss matters related to the employment of staff the Chairman might feel it appropriate that some part of the discussions are confidential. (Agenda item 16.)
8. **Lease - Club Supreme (Manor House Tennis)**
To agree by resolution a revised lease term of twenty-five years. (Clerk's report item 2.)
9. **Land at the Junction of Abbots Road and Dellmeadow**
To note the Clerk's report. (Clerk's report item 3.)
10. **Office Opening Hours**
To consider an amendment to office opening hours. (Clerk's report item 4.)
11. **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Report**
To note the report from the Chairman of the above. (Enclosed.)

Abbots Langley Parish Council

12. District and County Council Member's Reports

To consider any reports submitted by members of the above authorities.

13. Chairman's Report

To consider the Chairman's report.

14. Clerk's Report

To consider items on the Clerk's report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

15. Monthly Statement of Accounts

To consider the monthly statement of accounts for January & February 2019 and approve their publication on the Parish Council website.

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

As the following items will consider matters related to the employment of staff and the early stages of legal disputes a resolution to exclude the press and public may be required, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the LGA 1972, s100 & 102.

17. Planning and Highways Committee

To consider any staffing matters related to agenda item 7.

18. Current Legal Matters.

To receive an update from the Clerk. (To follow)

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Abbots Langley Parish Council

Clerk's Report - March 2019

1. Planning & Highways Committee

Members are aware that the Planning & Administration Officer is retiring at the end of March. Until I have clarity on the future of the Parish Council's Planning & Highways Committee it is impossible to recruit a replacement.

Parish and Town Councils are moving away from regular planning type meetings and whilst there is no "one size fits all" approach, the issues across the sector are similar.

In summary these are:

- District Council's not taking any regard of Parish and Town Council's comments on applications
- The cost of staffing and administering a committee which does at times not have a tangible output for residents.
- The member time taken up attending meetings at both Parish and District Council.
- In areas with a similar built environment to this parish the number of "single storey extensions" and "garage conversion" type applications.
- When reviewed by Parish Council's the high number of "no objections" applications.

Points to be Considered

- There is an argument that the number of planning applications that the Parish Council reviews could be drastically reduced, a look back through minutes will show the vast majority of applications are "no objection", those that are commented on are often approved by the District Council.
- The structure and frequency of meetings will have a direct impact on the recruitment of staff and officer workload. The current officer works 25 hours/week, plus a three weekly committee meeting, which is usually 2-3hrs/meeting including set up time.
- For the foreseeable future the Clerk will maintain responsibility for the Parish Council and Leisure portfolios and the Finance Officer responsibility for Finance & Administration.
- Whatever the future schedule of Planning & Highways committee meetings this workload will have to be taken on by another officer and the requirement to attend evening meetings form part of the job and person specification.
- The committee does give a "voice" to members of the public who have planning concerns, but equally this type of advocacy could be done as part of members routine casework.
- That the Parish Council should be able to comment on large developments or other applications that have a major significance for the area is not being questioned. This may require additional PC meetings if the role of P&H is to be reduced.
- I have intentionally held back from giving my recommendation. There are multiple solutions from no change through to stop commenting on any but the largest applications. Members need to decide what they think is appropriate and we will staff that accordingly.

Summary

In the immediate future I am very concerned about the workload that remaining staff will have to take on.

In the event of any unplanned absence the routine operations of the Parish Council will be compromised.

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Clerk's Report - March 2019

2. Lease - Club Supreme (Manor House Tennis)

Members agreed to a twenty-one-year lease to the above for the courts at Manor House (min. 186.).

Just on the point of completing the lease the club has asked that the term be revised to twenty-five years, as this is the minimum starting period for a lease to qualify the club for Lawn Tennis Association grant funding.

The above minute granted me delegated authority to make minor changes to the lease under advisement from Penman Sedgwick.

I do not consider term a minor amendment so am seeking approval for the change.

3. Land at the Junction of Abbots Road and Dellmeadow

The resident at 43 Abbots Road complained about the condition of the tree on land adjacent to her property. We referred her to Three Rivers District Council as we believed the land was in their ownership. Turns out it is the Parish Council's.

It is part of a package of land leased to the Parish Council in 1985 on a 99 year lease. Included in the package is the land to the south on the following plan.

There are two trees on the northerly plot and some very poor quality trees, bushes and shrubs on the southerly plot.

On 28th March our consultant arboriculturist will be carrying out a risk assessment on the trees and we will undertake the works specified.

It is likely the tree adjacent to no 43 will require significant work as it appears to have not been maintained for many years.

I have advised the resident accordingly.



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Clerk's Report - March 2019

4. Office Opening Hours

The office is open to the public:

Mon, Wed, Fri - 09:30-14:00

Tue, Thu - 14:00-17:00

These hours have been in place for a number of years, they pre-date my arrival (2007).

Officers are recommending we move to a consistent 09:30-14:00 daily opening times.

Footfall is much higher during the morning opening times and the consistent pattern will make it easier for officer cover. The revised hours would align with the working pattern of the Bookings Officer.

Residents also find the current opening hours confusing.

We obviously answer the phones during the closed times and will answer the door to any callers.

5. Three Rivers District Council - Property Services

I have met with Adrian Smallwood the recently appointed Head of Property at Three Rivers. The meeting was useful and constructive.

There are two open property issues with Three Rivers:

- Summerhouse Way garages. (Parish Council has agreed these will be returned to Three Rivers District Council, end of lease arrangements to be negotiated.)
- Jacketts Field Allotment lease. (Rent and term agreed just waiting for new lease to be issued.)

Hopefully these can be brought to conclusion quickly, both have been open for years.

6. Office Copies

Copies of the following are available in the office for member's reference.

Local Council Review - Winter 2019

Chiltern Society eNewsletter - February 2019

7. Diary Dates

20th May - Internal Audit and Sign Off of 2018-2019 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

As the above takes place after the Annual Council Meeting in May, the brief Parish Council to approve the above will be required on 19th June (19:00) prior to the Leisure Committee meeting that evening.

Tim Perkins

Clerk to the Council

5th March 2019