

Abbots Langley Parish Council

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7th July 2020.

To Members of the Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held virtually ^[1] on Monday 13th July 2020 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

[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.*

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**
11th May 2020.
6. **Minutes for adoption**
To adopt the following minutes and approve publication on the Parish Council's website.
 - Finance & Administration Committee - 1st June 2020
 - Staffing Committee - 3rd June 2020
 - Leisure Committee - 17th June 2020
7. **Pandemic Update**
To consider the report from the Clerk. (Clerk's report item 1.)
8. **Local Government Association - Draft Model Code of Conduct**
To consider if the Parish Council wants to make a response to the consultation on the above. (Clerk's report item 2.)
9. **Member Leave of Absence**
To agree by resolution Leave of Absence for members under the "Six Month Rule".
10. **Hertfordshire County Council - Storage Facility**
To agree by resolution the extension of the lease to the above. (Clerk's report item 3)

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- 11. Calendar of Meetings**
To note the requirement for an additional Parish Council meeting in August. (Clerk's Report item 4.)
- 12. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Report**
To note the report from the Chairman of the above. (enclosed.)
- 13. District and County Council Member's Reports**
To consider any reports submitted by members of the above authorities.
- 14. Chairman's Report**
To consider the Chairman's report.
- 15. Clerk's Report**
To consider items on the Clerk's report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 16. Monthly Statement of Accounts**
To consider the monthly statement of accounts for May & June 2020 and approve their publication on the Parish Council's website.
- 17. Exclusion of the Press and Public (Part II)**
As the following item will consider 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.
- 18. PC Freehold Land - Encroachment**
To consider recent correspondence with the Parish Council's solicitors and any subsequent updates. (Copy correspondence enclosed.)

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Abbots Langley Parish Council

Clerk's Report - July 2020

1. Pandemic Update

i. General Update

The following guidance from the National Association of Local Councils is still in place.

"Following the government announcement of further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4th July, as at 26th June, both NALC and SLCC strongly advise local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face to face contact.

The government rules still state that we should all work from home if we can."

Based on the above it is proposed that all meetings in July and August continue to be virtual and that staff remain working at home, with the office covered by one member of staff on working days.

Watford and Three Rivers still have no plans to reopen to all employees and remain with most staff working from home. (WBC/TRDC HR-06/07/2020)

HMG and advice from professional associations will continue to be monitored. The advice from professional associations has mostly been practical and useful.

The following pandemic related risk assessments are in place:

- General COVID-19 Operational Risks
- Staff Working in our Halls
- Hirers using our Halls
- Play Area Reopening and Operations
- Back to Work (office)
- Safe Working (all staff)
- Public Toilet Reopening & Cleaning

Considerable credit is due to the Facilities Manager who has put in a huge amount of work on the risk assessments and arrangements.

ii. Halls Reopening

In practical terms we are in a position where we could reopen the Manor House and Tanners Wood Hall. There are though a significant number of challenges.

Regular users such as the societies and associations have cancelled most bookings until at least January.

Based on the calculations for social distancing, the MH can host a max of twenty-seven guests and TWH forty. Most occasional hirers are saying these numbers are not practical for the usual type of family celebration. We are discussing arrangements with hirers on a booking by booking basis, but it is likely that until the situation changes significantly, the level of bookings in the MH will be low.

Catering arrangements will also need to be reviewed as kitchens will remain closed. In the MH there are corridor "pinch points" and issues around access to the toilets, which will make maintaining distancing difficult. There is also the alcohol factor and how practical any arrangements will be when guests have "had a few".

TWH can host a higher number of attendees but this is for a meeting, art class type, of event where movement is minimal. Dance, high energy exercise such as Zumba and martial arts classes are still currently on the HMG proscribed list.

The Facilities Manager and Works Manager are working on plans for screening the bar in MH and also the public access area in the offices. Although we will hold off installing anything in the office whilst operations are still being managed remotely.

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iii. Finances

The loss of revenue will cause some challenges for this council, the Finance and Administration Committee considered these at its meeting in June and will further review later this month.

As yet no support funding has trickled down to Parish and Town Councils from HMG, as this was to be managed via principal authorities, who have their own financial challenges.

The National Association of Local Councils are lobbying at ministerial level for financial support to local councils. As I write their progress appears to be at less than warp speed.

Whilst I am aware of a number of local councils that are facing some significant financial challenges, I am hearing of some, outside this area, where the "bankruptcy" word is being used. Those councils that had high external income and significant Public Works Loan Board repayments, supported by their trading income, are in the worst position.

The NALC CEO advised (03/07/2020), that following discussions with the local government minister a team of officials is being set up to look at parish council finances and the challenges the sector is facing.

2. Local Government Association - Draft Model Code of Conduct

Enclosed is the above, the aim is to create a Code of Conduct that applies to all levels of local government. The current situation for members that wear multiple hats, having different codes at different authorities, is both impractical and confusing.

The Society of Local Council Clerks has been lobbying for a unified code for a considerable time.

Members may want to submit a formal Parish Council response to the consultation or members can respond as individuals.

The consultation can be found at <https://bit.ly/ALPC-2020-07>.

3. Hertfordshire County Council - Storage Facility

In 2015 the Parish Council granted a five-year lease to the above, which is used for the storage of equipment for Youth Services projects. The unit is located adjacent to the entrance to the Manor House allotments.

HCC have asked if the lease can be extended for a further ten years with a mutual break clause at five years, terms unchanged. Costs for the account of HCC.

I recommend this is approved.



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4. Calendar of Meetings

Members are reminded that an additional Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 19th August @ 1900, prior to the Leisure Committee meeting, to approve the statutory Annual Governance Statement & Annual Return.

5. Summerhouse Way Garages

The garages at Summerhouse Way have been demolished, the electricity supply safely terminated by UK Power Networks and remedial works carried out to the fencing.

The site has been returned to Three Rivers District Council, all obligations on the Parish Council having been discharged.



6. Local Government Salary Review

The Association of Local Council Clerks (the separate union part of the Society of Local Council Clerks) has advised that the pandemic has delayed the national negotiations on the local government salary review.

The results of the negotiations are not expected until August "*at the earliest*".

7. Grants

Financial Grants

£750 - Autumn Fest to support the development of a website (£500) and to support event costs (£250). The £250 has been awarded, but as this year's event has been cancelled, this award will be held over and paid when the 2021 event is confirmed.

£2,000 was awarded to the Abbots Langley Festival 2020. This award will stand and will also be paid when the 2021 festival is confirmed.

Payment of both of the above has been delegated by the Finance & Administration Committee to the Clerk/Finance Officer.

Small Grants

£250 - Abbots Improvement Group (AIMs) to support its volunteer gardening work around the parish.

£250 - Leavesden Hospital History Association to support the costs of producing a book of stories and memories.

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8. Office Copies

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

NALC Report on the Local Council Elections (2019)

Tim Perkins

Clerk to the Council

7th July 2020

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