

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Council Offices
Langley Road
Abbots Langley
Herts
WD5 0EJ

7th September 2021.

To Members of the Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at Tanners Wood Hall, School Mead, Abbots Langley WD5 0LA on Monday 13th September 2021 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
Chief Officer & 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 12th July 2021.**
6. **Minutes for adoption**
To adopt the following minutes and approve publication on the Parish Council's website.
 - Planning & Highways Committee - 14th July, 4th & 25th August.
 - Finance & Administration Committee - 26th July 2021.
 - Leisure Committee - 18th August 2021.

Note: Minute numbers for meetings after 29th July may change when the minutes for the Review Panel are added to the minute book.
7. **Review Panel**
A meeting of the Review Panel was held on 29th July 2021 at 7:30pm in Tanners Wood Hall. The panel heard a complaint from a member of the public made against a member of staff. The decision of the panel is enclosed.
8. **Internal Audit Report (Final Report) 2020-2021**
(Referred from the Finance & Administration Committee min. 109.)
Members are asked to formally note the committee's review of the final Internal Audit report for 2020-2021 and that no significant items were raised by the auditors. (Report circulated for the F&A meeting 26th July 2021)

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9. **Depot Surface Project**
(Referred from the Leisure Committee min. 135.)
To consider the funding of the project as recommended by the Leisure Committee (Clerk's report item 1.)
10. **Staffing - Retirement of the Finance Officer**
To consider a report from the Chief Officer(s). (Clerk's report item 2.)
11. **Location of Parish Council & Committee Meetings**
To consider a report from the Chief Officer(s). (Clerk's report item 3.)
12. **Henderson Hall - Managing Trustee Appointment**
To consider any nominations that may have come forward for the trustee vacancy.
13. **Christmas & New Year Working 2021-2022**
To note the arrangements for the above. (Clerk's report item 4.)
14. **Three Rivers District Council - Response to the Local Plan**
To consider the report drafted by Councillor Jon Tankard and the Planning & Highways Committee and decide if this should be resolved by the Parish Council. (enclosed.)
15. **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Report**
To note the report from the Chairman of the above. (enclosed.)
16. **District and County Council Member's Reports**
To consider any reports submitted by members of the above authorities.
17. **Chairman's Report**
To consider the Chairman's report.
18. **Clerk's Report**
To consider items on the Clerk's report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
19. **Monthly Statement of Accounts**
To consider the monthly statement of accounts for July & August 2021 and approve their publication on the Parish Council's website.
20. **Exclusion of the Press and Public (Part II)**
As the following item will consider the early stages of a legal disputes into which the Parish Council may be entering 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.
21. **Abbots Langley Tennis Club - Club Supreme**
To receive a verbal update from the Clerk.

Abbots Langley Parish Council
Clerk's Report - September 2021

1. Depot Surface Project

Members are referred to the minutes of the August Leisure Committee meeting (min. 135.) and my report to the same meeting (item 1.).

A decision if the Capital Reserve (£85,000 ex-Fire Station sale) should be released to fund this project, or alternatively Community Infrastructure Levy funds, which stand at apx. £151k, following payment of the contribution to the Primrose play area.

£45k of the CIL funds will expire in October 2022 if not spent on qualifying projects.

2. Staffing - Retirement of the Finance Officer

The Finance Officer will be retiring at the end of November.

On 3rd September the Chief Officer(s) met online with Cllr Fran Deschampsneufs (the Chairman was not available) and Cllr Liz Burns, Chairman of the Finance & Administration Committee.

It was agreed that as previously discussed the role would be advertised as Finance Officer & Deputy Clerk (full time), a draft Job Description and Person Specification for the role has been shared with the above members.

This addition of Deputy Clerk responsibilities has been discussed at previous Staffing Committee meetings and will provide resilience to the operations. The additional hours have previously been included in the salary model that underpins the budget book.

Timescales are tight and having taken advice from our HR Business Partner we are talking to agencies about recruitment or if suitable candidates are not available, in the relatively short timescales, the availability of an Interim Finance Officer.

A further update will be available at the meeting.

3. Location of Parish Council & Committee Meetings

Due to the ongoing situation the Chief Officer(s) recommend Parish Council and committee meetings up until the calendar year end are held in Tanners Wood Hall.

Planning and Highways should be held in the Manor House, due to the availability of technology and WiFi.

Officers are unclear as to why members would want to cram into the chambers. The Parish Council owes a duty of care to staff and the Chief Officers who are responsible for risk assessments, given the ongoing pandemic situation, strongly recommend meetings are not held in the chambers and members support in this regard is expected.

4. Christmas & New Year Working 2021-2022

Staff have been asking what the arrangements will be.

Based on how we have done thing in previous years I have suggested the following, but clearly this will be subject to confirmation:

23 rd December (Thu)	Normal working hours
24 th December (Fri)	Office covered 09:30-12:00 (Close @ 12:00)
27 th /28 th December (Mon/Tue)	Office closed (Public Holidays in lieu of 25 th /26 th)
29 th December (Wed)	Office closed
30 th December (Thu)	Office covered 09:30-12:30
31 st December (Fri)	Office closed
3 rd January 2022 (Mon)	Public Holiday
4 th January (Tue)	Back to normal

Above all dependant on weather, staff availability and any lockdown rules in place at the time.

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The Works Team and Community Warden will carry out two litter runs and basic ground checks as usual, dates and times to be decided.

5. Members Attendance - Six Month Rule

All members, except Councillor Bowman attended the July Parish Council meeting. Councillor Bowman subsequently attended the August Leisure Committee meeting. No members are at risk of breaching the above until the New Year.

I have suggested to my successor that a check on the above takes place prior to the January Parish Council meeting.

If for any reason a member requires leave of absence, then the Clerk should be asked to add this to a Parish Council agenda.

6. Lemonfield Play Area - Liability Claim

I briefed members on the above at the July Parish Council meeting (min. 94).

I have been advised by the insurers they formally rejected this claim in July.

There is still the chance the claimant's solicitor will revert but the evidence we provided was comprehensive and hopefully sufficient to rebut what I considered to be a spurious and unwarranted claim. (*We must be getting close to the time limit for the solicitors to continue the claim.*)

I cannot estimate the days work myself and colleagues have spent defending claims like this over the years. Credit is due to the Community Warden and the Works Team for diligently carrying out the routine inspections, these have saved us from claims on countless occasions.

Whilst there is a place for solicitors to work on a "no win no fee" basis this places local authorities in the position of having to continually defend this type of claim.

Unfortunately, the law currently precludes us claiming back the cost of defending such claims even when from day one the claims are manifestly unreasonable.

7. Office Copies

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

Local Council Review - Summer 2021

Isabel Montesdeoca & Tim Perkins

Chief Officer(s) and Clerk to the Council
7th September 2021