

## **Abberley Parish Council**

### **The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish of Abberley Held at Abberley Village Main Hall**

**at 7pm on Wednesday 15th May 2019**

Present: Cllr C Knight (Chairman), Cllr Nott, Cllr K Andrew, Cllr T Eden,  
Cllr J Gibson, Cllr R Goodman, Cllr A Juckes, Cllr C Eberlin.

In Attendance: Cllr P Cumming, Cllr Dr. K Pollock and C Hirst, the Clerk and 6  
members of the public.

**1. Welcome & Introduction:** The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the  
meeting.

#### **2. Abberley Reports:**

2.a.i Abberley C of E Primary School – Mr. Joel Turvey introduced himself as the  
new Headteacher for the Primary School. He commented that he would like to get  
the school more involved with the community. The noted that 5<sup>th</sup> July was the school  
Summer Fair and on the 21<sup>st</sup> September the school were staging a Circus event. In  
September there will be 11 new starters. The pre-school is particularly strong. There  
are currently 99 students in the school and the school has a capacity for 120  
children.

2.a.ii Abberley Young Farmers Association- Sue Coley Spoke on behalf of AYFA. A  
copy of the report is appended to these Minutes.

2.a.iii Nora Parsons Day Centre - A copy of the report is appended to these Minutes

2.a.iv Abberley Green Trust- Sue Coley spoke on the report to the Parish Meeting on  
behalf of AYFA - A copy of the report is appended to these Minutes.

2.a.v Abberley Parochial Church Council - a copy of the report is appended to these  
Minutes.

2.a.vi Abberley Village Hall- a copy of the report is appended to these Minutes.

2.a.vii Hester Severne Trust- a copy of the report is appended to these Minutes.

2.a.viii County Councillors Report – Cllr. Dr Ken Pollock - a copy of the report is  
appended to these Minutes.

2.a.ix District Councillor's Report- Cllr. Paul Cumming - a copy of the report is  
appended to these Minutes.

2.a.x Abberley Neighbourhood Development Plan update- a copy of the report is  
appended to these Minutes.

2.a.xi Working Group to work with local event on 21<sup>st</sup> September- a copy of the  
report is appended to these Minutes.

2.a.xii Lengthsman Report- a copy of the report is appended to these Minutes.

## 2.a.xiii West Mercia Police- verbal update report.

Vanessa Snape delivered a verbal update to the Annual Parish Meeting. The Safer Neighbourhoods team have delivered a number of covert operations in the “wee” hours in an attempt to disrupt/stop rural crime ongoing. They also undertook a number of property marking event. The Safer Neighbourhoods Team offers basic security advice on homes, sheds, cars etc. Property Marking Events, Stop the Thief- Security advice from an accredited professional technician endorsed by the NFU. To reach the team call landline and leave a message on 01905 725780.

Or email [mt.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:mt.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk)

3. Annual Report of Abberley Parish Council – Cllr Catherine Knight (Chairman) a copy of the report is appended to these Minutes.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.08pm

## **APPENDICES**

### **2.a.ii Abberley Young Farmers Association**

The Club has had another busy year, starting with our Harvest Supper. A good amount was raised for the Club, and our fundraising for the Air Ambulance was commenced with the charity raffle. Thank you to everyone for their support with all our fundraising events including our famous Big Breakfast and our new event, the Muck Sale.

Competitions we have entered range from Stockman of the year, pub quiz, ballroom dancing and everything in between. We represented Worcestershire at the West Midland Area round of the ballroom dancing, but ended up coming 2nd and so missed out on a place in the National final again.

We have just had a very successful pre show weekend with prize cards of all colours, giving us a good head start for the upcoming County Show. This event is open to the public and £5 entry for this Show full of such an abundance of talents is a feast for the eyes. All are welcome, and we would love the support. Please look out for our advertisement board at Abberley Lodge with all the Show details.

We do have a couple of events coming up over the summer. The 1st is a Human Horse Racing evening in June, and the 2nd is a Big Tea Party in August. We would love to see you at these events.

Our Club has grown in age range, now 10 to 25, experience and numbers over the last 12 months, and we hope this will continue. If you know of a young person who might be keen to come and join us you can contact me, Chloe, on 07712 505 621.

### **2.a.iii Nora Parsons Day Centre**

We have had two main projects during the year. Firstly, to update the Centre to comply with all the present-day rules, regulations and legislation that came into force recently. This we have now done and it has been achieved by volunteers attending First Aid courses, applying for DBS checks and compiling a set of procedures so that we comply with all the authorities and organisations we rely on for support both financial and advisory. It is still our main aim to stay the independent, voluntary organisation that we have always been.

Secondly, has been to install double glazing. In 2015 we entered into a 99year Lease for which we paid an initial rent of £500 p.a. which is now, after five years, reduced to a peppercorn. One of the terms of the Lease is to keep the fabric in good repair. Whilst redecorating the exterior of the building Phil Stratford discovered that a large amount of the woodwork was suffering from dry and wet rot. To replace this would have cost a great deal of money. Double glazing has meant that rotten wood has and will be replaced leaving us with little or no further maintenance, so in that respect it has been worthwhile. The primary aim of the double glazing was to benefit the members and helpers and reduce the heating bills, so dealing with structural problems at the same time has been an added bonus. The total cost is in the region of £20,000. Banbury Windows, who in spite of their name are local, quoted for the work to be carried out in four phases over a period of time to suit them and us. Two phases have been completed, a third, that of the corridor area, has been surveyed and will be done in the Summer and the fourth the small windows and door in the main room, has yet to be considered in detail. This has taken place over a period of eighteen months and will have taken almost two years in all. I think it can be said that the benefit has already been appreciated. Banbury Windows have to be thanked for sticking to their quotation over this period of time.

Other activities over the year have included a visit to Evesham Shopping Centre, the Autumn Fayre, an outing to Tenbury Wells Garden Centre, the Christmas Dinner, and the recent Easter Fayre.

Our membership is lower than we would like. We know there are people in the area we serve that would benefit from visiting us and we must now concentrate on attracting them to the Centre. I am always astounded at the support the Centre gets from the community and anything asked for appears as if by magic. However, we do need more consistent help in the Centre on a weekly basis and more volunteer drivers to bring members to the Centre. Please encourage people to visit us and see what we offer and the benefits we are able to provide.

Pam Morgan, Secretary.

#### **2.a.iv Abberley Green Trust**

Once again the Village Green has looked spectacular this spring, as I'm sure those of you that visit it will have noticed, this is down mainly to about half a dozen of us who work hard to keep it looking good for those who do use it to enjoy.

We have to express our thanks to an anonymous donor who supplied the materials for the new path and to Charles Whitaker, John Coley and Fred Shellis for making it happen, also many thanks to Roger Messenger for treating all the seats with Wood Preservative and to Janet Osbourne for the hours she puts in weeding the shrub beds and also to John Coley for mowing the grass.

We now have a Face Book page set up by Lynne Whitaker which is proving to be quite popular.

The trust has had a couple of generous donations throughout the year, of which we are of course very grateful, 3 of us work at Red Marley Hill Climb, along with some

other village organisations and last year we received £400 and we hope to get a similar amount this year, our only other fund raising event is my annual Tea Party, the funds from which go towards the gardener and the fuel for mowing. The Tea Party this year is on 26th June so it would be nice if you all could support it.

We've had many lovely comments throughout the year about the Green and how lucky we are to have it but a little bit of help to keep it as lovely as it is would be much appreciated.

### **2.a.v Abberley Parochial Church Council**

First, thanks to the Parish Council for its continuing support and donations to the Parish News.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to the running of the Churches in Abberley over the past year, especially those behind the 'scenes', the flower arrangers, the cleaners, the clock winder, light bulb replacement and the churchyard maintenance. Their service is invaluable. Not forgetting those that help run the services.

We continue to run with 2 11am Sunday Services in St Mary's and 4 Sunday Evening Services in St Michal's, 2 early morning services and 1 Holy Communion during the week. This gives a total of 6 full services per week with an aggregate number in the congregation of 80 per month. We also have the Remembrance Service with Great Witley, the Christmas and Easter Services and recently the World Day of Prayer.

The PCC is considering revamping the rear of St Mary's Church to include a meeting room, kitchen and improved toilet facilities. Due to the sad death of our Architect, our Architect, progress in this area has been halted temporarily.

### **2.a.vi Abberley Village Hall**

The committee under the chairmanship of Sue Coley has met six times this last year. Regular users of the hall are encouraged to send a representative so that current issues/ problems can be discussed and resolved.

The hall continues to be very well used especially during weekdays when Abberley Pre-school and Abberley Primary School take the majority of the time; weekends are increasingly in demand and we are always pleased to welcome new 'clients' – and old of course!

Over the years we have benefited from lottery funding to replace and renew facilities, this year new chairs are to be purchased, to replace the old ones which are now past their 'use by date'.

Financially the committee seeks to maintain a healthy balance to provide for any structural emergency that might occur, we are however still dependant on a high level of bookings.

A new constitution has been adopted and submitted to the Charity Commissioners.

We are extremely grateful to Sue and John Coley, and to Jan and Phil Osbourne

who do so much in dealing with every-day maintenance issues, not to mention as Chair and Secretary to the Committee. A huge vote of thanks must go to Sheena Murray who has been Booking Secretary for many years and retired in April. We welcome Janet Osbourne as the new Booking Secretary.

Our thanks too to Julie Mills, our Treasurer, and to Tony Eden who is our Accounts Independent Examiner.

The hall is a first-class facility for our village and thus will always need the support of the community; the committee will welcome new volunteers who are willing to help. Also please always consider it for a family or social event; rental charges are very competitive!

## **2.a.vii Hester Severne Trust**

Originally set up in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the trust was to provide for the education of children of the Parish of Abberley. There are five trustees, three appointed by the Parochial Church Council and two appointed by the Parish Council. It is currently chaired by Mark Manning.

The trust has provided the school playing field and a mobile classroom for the school in times where investment income was considerably higher than has been the case over recent years. Interest earned has been used to contribute to the cost of employing a classroom assistant.

The policy of the trustees is to maintain the fund at or just over £100,000. The recent very low rates of interest on charitable funds has restricted the support available to the school.

The trustees meet annually with the Headteacher to receive reports on the school and later to determine what, if any, can be given towards school funding.

## **2.a.viii County Councillors Report**

### **1. County Council Affairs - personnel**

At this time last year, we were about to welcome our new team of senior officers, comprising the Chief Executive, Paul Robinson, the Chief Finance Officer, Michael Hudson, the Chief Commissioning Officer, Andrew Spice, and the Interim Director of Adult Social Care Services, Avril Wilson. In addition, we have since confirmed Richard Taylor as Head of Human Resources.

They joined John Hobbs, director of Economy and Infrastructure, Francis Howie in charge of Public Health, and Catherine Driscoll, the director of Children's Services. I can report that the new senior management have settled in well, working with the Cabinet to produce a viable range of services appropriate to the County's needs, and consistent with our income of around £330 million a year.

That is not to say that we have not faced substantial difficulties in balancing the budget, and Abberley residents will be aware of some of the stress points that have been encountered during the year. Despite the controversy, I think we can be

assured that the necessary range and depth of services will continue to be delivered as required.

## **2. County Council Affairs – council tax**

Once again, we find it necessary to increase Council Tax, this time by 3.99% overall. Within that sum, there is a 1% rise dedicated to Adult Social Care, as the government recognises the increasing burden of an ageing population, some of whom require council support. This overall increase is equivalent to £0.93p per week for a Band D property.

## **3. Council County Affairs – expenditure**

Many people will be aware that our Children's Services have been judged as requiring improvement and as a result we have found it necessary to place the department into a wholly owned company, named Worcestershire Children First. This will formally come into operation in October, although it now exists in shadow form.

This new venture has to be seen in the context of two years of continuous improvement in Children's Services, as a result of concerted effort of all staff, under the leadership of Catherine Driscoll and her colleague Tina Russell. We are hopeful that the new company will assist in this continuous improvement, so that the whole department may be returned to the County Council in a short while.

The Government has promised a Green Paper on adult social care for some time, but its publication is still imminent. This is an area of increasing need, but there is the crucial matter of the boundary between County Council funded care and the National Health Service. Clearly both organisations should be working towards the same goal, but there are occasional conflicts about responsibilities and allocation of expenditure between the two organisations.

As I observed last year, all other services are paid from the residue of income after these two departments are financed. This has resulted in difficult decisions on funding for libraries, archives and the possible need to charge for parking. It should be emphasised that there are no plans to close any libraries, and the archive service is adequately funded to carry out its essential and valuable work.

That said, we are very keen to run an efficient and effective council, and this is resulting in a detailed examination of our ways of working, aimed at maintaining or improving the service with fewer personnel and resources.

We naturally hope that this endeavour will be supported by all residents, and I would encourage everyone to let me and the officers know of any deficiencies in our performance over the year.

## **4. Infrastructure**

One of my Cabinet responsibilities concerns infrastructure, and, unlike my colleagues who are concerned with children and vulnerable adults, it means that I get to work on some exciting big physical projects.

In the last year we have doubled the width of the railway bridge on the Southern Link Road between Whittington and Norton. This manoeuvre has been recognised as a difficult project well executed by the receipt of two awards for excellence already. We have also had confirmation of the Government's financial support for the 4<sup>th</sup> phase of the link road, so that is now steaming ahead, aiming for opening in 2021. This will involve dualling the road between the Ketch and the Powick roundabouts, including a second Carrington Bridge and the flood overflow viaduct, as well as the widened causeway for some 1.2 miles.

By the end of this calendar year, Worcestershire Parkway Rail Station should be opened and fully operational. This will mean many trains to and from London stopping there, and some initial services on the Cross-Country line also stopping. We are hopeful that more of the latter will join them, giving residents of the County the chance of joining trains to and from the south west and north east without leaving Worcestershire.

In addition, we are in process of a complete renewal of Kidderminster Station, as well as starting on the improvement of the A38 through Bromsgrove.

Meanwhile, there are exciting developments at our Game Changer sites at W6, Redditch Gateway and the Malvern Hills Science Park, all related to improving the economy of the County and increasing our business rate income and the number of good jobs available for our residents.

## **2.a.ix District Councillor's Report**

The past year has seen continued efforts at Malvern to improve services in spite of the difficult financial background.

Although many councils in Worcestershire have experienced difficulties, we have continued to build our reserves and have a robust five-year plan in place to ensure we continue to have a balanced budget in the light of expected future grant reductions, by means of genuine efficiency savings.

As part of this we are bringing telephony back in house and have just opened a reception facility at the Council House to welcome local residents now that all the Council Offices are in one building. We also played an important part in bringing about a business rates retention pilot scheme for one year, which will result in the County receiving an additional £5m to help with Adult Social Care and Children's services. Additional funding has also been put aside for rural transport schemes in light of further reductions in bus services.

The alternative weekly waste collection has been implemented during the year and we have now seen a reduction in general waste being produced as well as a substantial increase in recycling.

I feel privileged to be elected to represent Woodbury Ward for another four years, albeit without a contested election on this occasion.

There is now no overall control on the Council as a result of changes in Malvern and elsewhere. A coalition or partnership (according to which of the members you listen to) has been formed between a most of the Independent councillors plus the Green and Liberal groups. This was announced last night and further details are awaited. I will therefore not be retaining my portfolio responsibility for finance and resources. This does however give me more time to concentrate on the revision of the SWDP, which needs to be completed this year, as the outcome of this will have an important bearing on our rural area. There will be a formal consultation period, but getting points considered at an early stage is important and I welcome any input at this point.

As always, I am available at any time to deal with issues concerning local residents and Parish Councils and should be pleased to answer any questions that anyone may have this evening.

### **2.a.x Abberley Neighbourhood Development Plan update**

The Neighbourhood Plan group has been supported by an independent planning consultant, Dr David Nicholson for most of this year, funded by a government grant. Parish Council funds have also covered clerking of meetings from the Parish Clerk so work is now proceeding well.

The South Worcestershire Development Plan, although only a few years old, is already being reviewed, this is to ensure that it remains a live planning document to 2041. A call for sites across Worcestershire to deliver housing need to 2041 was also issued in July 2018. The NP group submitted a detailed response to the Issues and Options consultation stage of the review and also commented on a methodology for the revision of development boundaries, both with assistance from Dr Nicholson.

We were also able to seek additional support for a number of free consultant packages and have commissioned a Housing Needs Assessment and a Design Statement.

The Housing Needs Assessment commissioned in October 2018 was eventually received in draft form in February, the delay was due to a change in the approach for calculating housing need. The final report should be ready for the public consultation meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

Design guidance for housing and sites was commissioned in March 2019. After a visit to the area, the consultant is developing guidance for the three sites within the existing SWDP and sites with current planning permission. A draft should be completed for the 28<sup>th</sup> June meeting.

The first draft of the housing delivery report will be complete by the time the Working Group meets in May, ready for public consultation on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

The group are now meeting bi-monthly meet on the fourth Thursday of the month in the committee room of Abberley Village Hall from 7.30pm.

### **2.a.xi Working Group to work with local event on 21<sup>st</sup> September.**

Abberley Late Summer Shindig – Sat Sept 21<sup>st</sup>



## Background

It became apparent last summer that some groups and organisations within Abberley are struggling to find new members, from this Councillors Knight and Gibson thought it would be a good idea to look at ways of bringing the villages of Abberley together.

## Proposal

To hold an annual summer event that brings all villagers together in one place where we can enjoy each other company and allow the organisations in Abberley to talk with and encourage new members.

## Event

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> Sept we shall host in the Village hall an evening dance, with Food and drink where villagers can come together to meet the organisations at the start of the evening and then share in the enjoyment of an evening dance.

If successful we plan to hold this annually but look to use the Village green and make it a daytime / evening event.

## Goals

To encourage new membership of organisations, make new friends in the village and come together as a village young and old.

## **2.a.xii Lengthsman Report**

Cllr. Trevor Nott reported that we consider us very fortunate to have such an excellent Lengthsman in Mr Chris Bunn. I have never seen the ditches and drains so clean and clear of debris. He is very cooperative and executes his tasks in a timely and professional manner. If anyone has any problems in that regard, please inform either myself or our Parish Clerk. He is great asset to the Village.

## **3. Annual Report of Abberley Parish Council – Cllr Catherine Knight (Chairman)**

Chairman's Report to the Annual Parish Meeting for the Year 2018/19

## Past and Current Activity

The past year has seen a continuance of the normal business of a Parish Council. We have dealt with the usual Planning Applications; complaints about speeding, a perennial problem of which we are acutely aware; pollution and flooding in Suffolk Lane, which remedy is now in the hands of the Environment Agency; hedge cutting, particularly on Church Terrace; the mysterious water leak in the Village, now in the able hands of Highways; the resurfacing of Suffolk Lane; mapping and maintenance of cross country paths; and, of course, the progression of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Due to tree management at Tump House there is now a TPO on a willow in its grounds; the first in Abberley. That is probably a timely reminder to those living in the

Conservation area that permissions do need to be sought from the relevant authorities as to the management of trees and hedgerows.

We were also asked by the Village Hall Committee to consider taking on the running of the Hall should the Committee be unable to perform the task due to lack of new committee membership. We duly considered and voted to accept the task if the occasion should arise.

A spot inspection of the Lengthsmans' Scheme showed that we were compliant in all respects.

We also responded to the Call for Sites, part of the SWDP Review; the Consultation for Issues and Options; the Methodology for establishing Development Boundaries; and joined forces with Little Witley and three other Parish Councils, at the suggestion of our District Councillor, Paul Cumming, with the aim of getting the powers that be to consider road infrastructure before any more new developments were agreed. I understand the group supporting that issue has now grown.

We have now entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and are in the process of establishing internet banking for the Parish Council.

A new website has been created which we hope will see much use by parishioners.

You will also note that the Neighbourhood Watch has produced some signs which are now positioned around Abberley.

#### Future Events

As to the future we are holding a Neighbourhood Plan Consultation on June 28<sup>th</sup> at the Village Hall between 7.00pm and 9.00 pm which all parishioners are encouraged to attend; a free security marking event in September, date to be confirmed and a village tidy up in conjunction with the WI, again towards the latter part of the year.

After discussion it was decided to hold a community event with the dual aims of furthering community cohesion and attracting more members to the many and varied groups in Abberley. Jim Gibson who was instrumental in formulating this idea chairs the working group. It has now taken the form of a Ceilidh with all the groups in Abberley advertising their wares on the night. It must be noted that the Friends of Abberley School have arranged for a circus on the same day so Abberley will be humming with activity on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September – a date for your diary.

#### Thanks

There has been a flurry of activity amongst the Parish Councillors themselves and this year we had to accept the resignation of the Chairman, Mr Trevor Nott; the Parish Clerk, Mrs Kym Wild, and two Councillors, Mrs Ning Kedwards and Mr Godfrey Crompton. Needless to say huge thanks to them for all their dedication and hard work

over the last few years; to Kym, for all the work as the Parish Clerk that so often goes unsung because so much of it is behind the scenes and for her unstinting support of Trevor as Chairman; to Ning for her dedication as the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator (which role she has retained) and for her financial expertise with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan; to Godfrey for his setting up of the previous Parish website, detailed research as part of the fight against overdevelopment in Abberley and his agreement to be our Community Representative on the Action Group formed to deal with the scourge of speeding along the A443; last but not least to Trevor for his wise steering of the Parish Council over the last eight years and dedication to the well-being of Abberley and all its inhabitants. Thankfully, he remains as a Parish Councillor.

And I must thank all our Councillors for their attendances, good ideas and willingness to assume roles and tackle the tasks that come their way.

I think everyone would agree that we are very fortunate in our County Councillor, Dr Ken Pollock and District Councillor, Mr Paul Cumming for their regular attendance, willingness to help and timely advice.'

We also benefited greatly from the expertise of Mr Kevin Gittins, who gave invaluable assistance to both myself and Mrs Hirst in getting to grips with the financial side of things.

I think I speak for everyone on the Parish Council when I say that Abberley has never looked so well-groomed and all because of the efforts of our Lengthsman, Mr Chris Bunn, who has transformed our verges, drains and paths beyond what might ordinarily be expected.

The thanks continue – we are very lucky to have so many Parishioners who volunteer for the many and various Groups dedicating themselves to making Abberley a wonderful place to live. In particular I would like to mention the Garden Club who unfailingly produce seasonal flower boxes even after they have been stolen!; the Village Green Trust who look after that fantastic facility for the use of all and the Village Hall Committee who maintain the hall to such a high standard and ensure that it is put to the best possible use.

The last thanks go both to Mrs Janet Gittins who very kindly stepped in as a temporary Parish Clerk and helped me enormously in my first few weeks as Chairman and to Mrs Carole Hirst whom we were very pleased to appoint as the new permanent clerk. As we all know the price of a good clerk is beyond pearls and absolutely essential to the smooth running of the Parish Council.

That concludes my report as Chairman.