

The Minutes of Abberley Parish Council  
Held via ZOOM at 7.30pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020

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Present: Cllr. Knight (Chairman), Cllr. Eden, Cllr. Eberlin, Cllr. Andrew, Cllr. Goodman, Cllr. Jukes, Cllr. Ballard, Cllr. T Nott.

In Attendance: (Carole Hirst) Clerk. MHDC Councillor, Cllr. Cumming; WCC Councillor, Cllr. Dr. Pollock.

Item 296	<b>Apologies</b>	None.
297	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	Cllr. Eberlin declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Minute "Suffolk Lane and Jacobs Well – flooding issues". Cllr. Andrew Declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary interest in Minute 3030 (e) Grant request for £400 for Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust as a Trustee of the trust and Minute 303 (b) payment for the same organisation for services for the Abberley NDP. Cllr. Nott Declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest in Minute 303 items (f) and (g) as a trustee of each organisation.
298	<b>Democratic Period/ Public Time</b>	No members of the public attended.
299	<b>Minutes</b>	Cllr. Ballard Proposed and Seconded by Cllr. Goodman that the Minutes were a true record, and all agreed to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2020. The Chairman duly signed them as a true record.
300	<b>Matters Arising</b>	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Blocked drain on Wynnatts Way-</b> Clerk reported this to the Lengthsman who reported it to WCC Highways as this has been a long-standing issue. Response back from WCC Highways to the Lengthsman is "Our Contractors advised they jetted this on 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020. I am taking it that this has not solved the drainage problem there. I'll ask our maintenance team to send another inspector and use the Lengthman's e-mail address so they can respond directly to you once the inspection has been completed but if you need assistance in the meantime please e-mail me back". Councillors reported that the drains were still an issue and Cllr. Pollock agreed to chase this up with WCC Highways.</li></ul>
301	<b>County and District Councillor Reports</b>	Cllr. Cumming MHDC Report circulated prior to the meeting attached as Appendix 1. Cllr. Cumming added that he had chased up the COVID grant for Abberley Village Hall and confirmed that the payment of £10,000 had now been received by the village hall.  Cllr. Pollock WCC Report circulated prior to the meeting attached as Appendix 2. Reports Received.
302	<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>28/4/20- WCC-</b> Applications for an Independent Lay Member of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel are invited from members of the public. Closing date: 5pm on Monday 18 May 2020. <b>Noted.</b> (On Parish Council website) <b>3/5/20-</b> MHDC- Request for road name - 26 new Properties - Land at Clows Top Road, Abberley. The Clerk has created a page on the website for residents to find out about it and to ask for the community to choose their favourite option. Residents can email their vote or write it down and post it in a box in the village store. Votes to be counted on 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2020 and communicated to MHDC. If there are no votes then the Parish Council will choose an option.

Chairman.....

Date.....

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**7/5/20-** Cllr. Pollock- update on the re-opening of Household Recycling Centres on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020. **Noted and uploaded to Parish Council website for information.**  
**12/5/20-** Wychavon Leisure Walking Group- wrote to the Parish Council regarding the death of one of its walking leaders offering to fund a bench at the view point in Abberley. The Parish Council felt a second bench was not really required but suggested that a contribution towards the replacement of Information Panels for walkers would be a more fitting contribution. Action: Clerk to write to the walking group asking if this would be acceptable and offer to supply a contact to take this forward.

**303 Finance**

a)The Parish Council were asked to consider approval of the quote from Zurich Insurance for £305.42 for 2020/21 to renew the Parish Council insurance on a 3-year term as agreed by Finance Committee. Cllr. Nott Proposed and Cllr. Eberlin Seconded that this be approved. All in favour.

b) Receipts, Payments up to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020.  
 Cllr. Jukes Proposed and Cllr. Eden Seconded that the Payments presented to the meeting on the 20th May 2020 be Approved and Receipts noted. 6 in favour. Cllr. Nott and Cllr. Andrew Declared Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests and were not present to vote.

<u>Payments list May 20th 2020</u>				
Carole Hirst Salary to 5th May 20			£ 389.00	
HMRC Payment Nov to 5th May 20			£ 97.20	
Carole Hirst expenses 4th April to May 20th 20			£52.05	
Abberley Village Green Trust grant 2019/20 and 2020/21			£ 400.00	<b>Approved</b>
Abberley PCC grant 2019/20 and 2020/21			£ 600.00	<b>Approved</b>
In2Out April 20 Lengthsman			£ 91.00	
BWP Creative Ltd (website annual costs incl. VAT)			£ 216.00	
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust (NDP)			£ 150.00	
Zurich Municipal Insurance 20.21			£ 305.42	
Wyre Piddle PC SHARED STATIONERY			£ 10.82	
DJN Planning Ltd			£ 420.00	

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<b>TOTAL</b>		<b><u>£2,731.49</u></b>
<b><u>RECEIPTS upto May 20th not previously reported</u></b>		
MHDC Precept payment 1		£5,071.50
Groundwork UK (NDP funds)		£3,120.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>		<b><u>£8,191.50</u></b>

c)Bank Reconciliation at 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020 **Noted.**

d)May 2020 Revised Budget Monitoring Report was circulated prior to the meeting. **Noted.**

e)To consider Approval of £400 grant to Earth Heritage Trust towards cost of Interpretation Panel. Cllr. Andrew declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest and left the meeting. Cllr. Knight Proposed and Cllr. Eden Seconded that a Grant be considered at the next meeting subject and conditional to Cllr. Pollock giving a grant from the WCC Divisional Fund of £1000 and a grant being received from Great Witley Parish Council to a similar or higher level as Abberley Parish Council and consideration should also be given to the funding received from the Wychavon Walking Group before a final grant sum is agreed. All in favour.

f) To approve the grant payment to Abberley Village Green Trust of £400 towards insurance which was not paid in 2019/20. This has been approved by the Finance Committee and referred for approval to the Parish Council. The £400 grant for 2020/21 has been deferred until we have the clarity from the Village Green Trust on who paid the insurance last year if we did not and when we have considered our overall spending against budget. Cllr. Gibson Proposed and Cllr. Goodman Seconded that the grant of £400 be approved. All in favour.

g).To approve the grant payment to Abberley PCC which was not paid in 2019/20 of £600 towards activities which took place in 2019/20. 2020/21 request for a further £600 to be deferred until such time that restrictions from COVID 19 are lifted and activities can take place and when we have considered our overall spending against budget. Cllr. Jukes Proposed and Cllr. Goodman Seconded that the grant of £600 be approved. All in favour.

304 **Planning**

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2020- Submission of the Wyre Forest District Local Plan (2016 – 2036) to the Secretary of State to form the basis of an Independent Examination on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020.**

**19/01887/FUL- 33 The Village, Abberley-** Alterations and extension to provide ancillary accommodation in outbuilding- **REFUSED 15/5/20**

**20/00637/FUL- New Haseland Farm, Abberley-** Variation of conditions: Erection of dwelling house (farmhouse). Removal of Conditions 3 & 6 of planning permission

99/01267/FUL- Variation of conditions-The Parish Council decided that they were not qualified to make any comments and requested that the Clerk submit to the planning portal that the Parish Council submits “no comment”.

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- 305 **Progress reports from Parish Councillors/**  
A) Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
- Cllr. Knight: The Abberley Neighbourhood Development Plan is now ready to be presented for Public Consultation. David Clarke from Malvern reviewed the draft plan and David Nicholson amended it as he thought appropriate. It was in David Clarke's view 'well presented, clear and logical.'  
We were asked to provide any sites that we thought might benefit from Local Green Space designation. This affords great protection to those sites the status being akin to Green Belt; the proviso is that the examiner agrees with their inclusion.  
They are:  
St Michael's and St Mary's Churchyards  
The Glebe Land in the Village  
The green space surrounding the Village Hall  
Rosedale  
Abberley Village Quarry  
The Village Green  
All owners/trustees have received a letter from the Parish Clerk outlining the above. This Consultation will be run for eight weeks from 29th June to 24th August 2020. We will advertise this fact in a variety of ways before that date. Everyone will be able to read the Plan and to express their opinion in different formats. There will be hard copies of the Plan for those without internet access. Indeed, we are going beyond what the latest directives from Malvern suggest.  
As we are not able to run any events it is extremely important that Abberley is made aware of this consultation so that everyone has an opportunity to have their say. Therefore, I would encourage word of mouth which, as we know, is very effective in addition to all the other methods we will be using.  
Councillors will be on hand to answer any questions from the public  
We will propose at the Parish Council Meeting on 20th May that this plan now goes forward for Public Consultation
- Cllr. Knight Proposed and Cllr. Andrew Seconded that '*the consultation draft Abberley Neighbourhood Development Plan is approved for the purposes of pre-submission consultation and publicity in accordance with the relevant regulations*'. All in favour.
- B) Lengthsman
- The Clerk reported that WCC agreed to allow the Lengthsman to continue with restricted duties following the Clerk providing a Risk Assessment for approval. Lengthsman notified and given the Risk Assessment to adhere to.
- C) Parish Footpaths Warden
- Cllr. Andrew report: Cllr Gibson has informed the WCC team that he has stepped down as warden and that I am willing to take over. I have had emails from the team who wish to have a training briefing before this is official. I am also awaiting contact from the WCC team for confirmation that Cllr Gibson can pass over the tools and resources.  
In the meantime, I've been using my daily exercise to walk paths in the parish and have now done about 75% of them other than the far eastern end of the parish. It's clear that many other people are out walking as most routes are well trodden. Fallen trees including some very large ones, reported to Cllr Gibson at recent parish council meetings have been sawn up and there are no blockages due to these. I have encountered a lot of new gates, one very good new stile and a new footbridge. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Gibson for his work to achieve this. So far, I have come across only four Abberley paths that are completely blocked, impossible to see where they are supposed to be on the ground and impassable. However, a lot have missing or badly damaged stiles but are still negotiable via a detour to a field gate or fence that can be climbed, one stile that is completely impossible to get over. The uprights on many stiles are rotten so they need to be held whilst the other person climbs over. Lots of way marking is very faded, many finger posts have rotted off or the direction signs are broken off or missing.

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I have been notified of two issues already by parishioners and have referred people onto the report-it system as until officially appointed I'm not clear what the best route to take action is. I've also met several people out walking who are also keen on maintaining access to the footpath network.

Some of the work needed to keep stile clear of brambles and nettles and encroachment from hedges, where they meet the road network could possibly be allocated to the parish Lengthsman and will need attention in the next month or so.

I have discussed with John White WCC Footpath Co-ordinator and I will be working as a volunteer for WCC and will need to undertake training. Cllr. Eberlin offered any assistance she could to support Cllr. Andrew in this role. Cllr. Gibson thanked Cllr. Andrew for taking on this role.

D) Shavers End  
Quarry incident  
9/5/20

Statement from Wyre Forest Police- 9/5/20- The 'Blue lagoon' in Stourport. Not so much an exotic Caribbean retreat, more a cold, rubbish filled quarry with 2 cars at the bottom & caustic 200-foot-deep lime filled pools for good measure. Needless to say, that swimming here is dangerous & unpredictable. 40 people were removed this afternoon & details taken. It beggar's belief that we encountered two families who had taken their babies over the rugged, filthy & dangerous terrain. Apparently, it is not clear that people are not allowed in....I would have thought that a heavily fenced entrance with barbed wire wrapped around the barrier would stand out as obvious. Cannabis seized and Covid breaches a plenty. It took a while, but we got there & will be patrolling there regularly." The Clerk contacted Astley and Dunley Parish Council and a joint letter was sent to the police from both Parish Councils thanking the Police for their work on this matter.

Cllr. Knight further reported that a local farmer with land near and adjacent to Shavers End Quarry was having huge problems with parked cars blocking access to fields prohibiting the necessary work of a farmer and also trespass on his land. He also reported cars racing along the lanes and much noisy activity at night. He has informed the Police on several occasions and is looking for the Parish Council to help get this resolved.

He was advised by the Chair to start logging every incident and to report number plates to the police and to the Parish Council.

It was agreed that the Clerk ask Ning Kedwards who would be the most appropriate Police Officer with authority to help sort this out. The Clerk would then organise a meeting with Ning, the relevant Police Officer and Parish Councillors where the Police could advise on the public nuisance and anti-social behaviour. It was also agreed that the WCC Police and Crime Commissioner be written to about the situation.

<https://www.abberleyparish.org.uk/news/worcestershire-county-council-has-a-website-where-you-can-report-wcc-issues-that-affect-you>

306 Councillors  
reports and items  
for future  
agendas.

A complaint was received in May regarding Highways cutting back a verge which contained wild flowers. The Clerk contacted WCC Highways and they advise that they cut back highway verges twice each year to 1 metre depth. If the Parish Council want to apply to have a planted verge left and to maintain it themselves at their cost then they can apply to do so. The clerk agreed to put this on the June agenda for the Parish Council.

2 Suffolk Lane- Reports of land encroachment from a new resident at the said property. Fence moved and is using WCC land to park 4 vehicles on. WCC requested photos of the encroachment so that they can investigate. Cllr. Eberlin agreed to investigate and report back to WCC.

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Cllr. Ballard requested that an item regarding Planning Enforcement be placed on the June agenda.

Cllr. Ballard reported that he had spoken to Frank Chapman from MHDC regarding Section 106 for Abberley Parish.

**307** Date of Next meeting

The next Parish Council meeting is on Wednesday June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7.30pm. A **Zoom** invitation will be emailed and advertised on the Parish Council website.

**The meeting closed at 8.54pm**

**Appendix 1 WCC Councillor Report – Cllr. K. Pollock**

**National policies**

Anyone living in England is entitled to feel a little confused about the current state of play in our battle against the coronavirus. Sometimes it seems the media in general, and the BBC are more interested in scoring points against the government than in elucidating the current situation.

To take one example, the Prime Minister speaks to the whole nation of the United Kingdom. The devolved administrations have the power to modify the plans put forward by the Prime Minister. The BBC chooses to say that Boris is speaking only to and about England. This is not true but shows confusion.

If you read the 60 page document produced by the government, you will see clear policies for the current situation, but you will also see that reference is made to the powers of the devolved administrations to modify the UK laws. That is their right. Broadly speaking, the current position in England is that we should work from home, if possible, but otherwise go to work as usual, while observing social distancing. Some classes of primary schools may open on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, with others later, but some may not open until the autumn term.

The teaching unions are fearful about this, but do not seem to have learnt anything from the fact that schools have been looking after vulnerable children, and those of key workers, for seven weeks, apparently without any problems of infection or transmission.

**County council policies**

The County Council has adopted the “work at home” policy and is managing to conduct much of its work satisfactorily that way. Naturally, there are many areas where on site working is required. Highway work continues and attention to the A443 between Great Witley and Newnham Bridge is imminent. I have strongly recommended that siding out work be undertaken between Great Witley and Hillhampton, as the footway along much of that stretch of the A443 is very narrow. Social workers need to keep in touch with children in care and those older people who need their assistance. There are 186 care homes in the county and early on they indicated they did not want to take patients from hospitals, if they might be infective with C19. As a result, the county booked 200 hotel rooms to take these patients, to ensure there would be no infection of others in care homes by these discharged patients.

It appears that other counties did not do this, and some authorities threatened to withhold payments to care homes, if the latter did not take these potentially dangerous patients. This county avoided such problems, but has now stood down all the hotel rooms, except at Cadmore Lakeside, in St Michael's, Tenbury. I visited

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Cadmore last Thursday and they are content with the situation, although they could take a lot more patients in process of convalescence.

While the number of patients dying in hospitals and care homes seems to be declining, vigilance must be maintained. Meanwhile, most of our household recycling centres have re-opened, Tenbury opening for the first-time last Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> May. After an initial flurry of activity, resulting in queues on to the Bromyard Road, demand settled down and the staff were well able to cope. For the moment, in Worcester, Hallow Road is not open, but Bilford Road is operational, as is Bonemill in Stourport. Garden centres may now open legally, as will be true of many shops. Small village shops have always been exempt from the general closure, and I am sure we are all grateful for the service they have provided.

Personal and business advice is still available through the County website and "Here2Help", and the Worcestershire 1000 site, run by Worcestershire Business Central. In seeking to revive the economy we are very grateful for the help of the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce, the FSB and the NFU, among others.

Agriculture has always relied on seasonal labour for fruit and vegetable picking and the like. It is widely believed that supplies of overseas help have been terminated by our leaving the EU. This is not true, and various groups of workers have arrived from the east of Europe. In addition, however, the call has gone out for local people to offer to help, particularly for those displaced from their normal work.

Sometimes, this has not been successful, for a variety of reasons. Access to farms may not be easy. The work may demand long hours for little pay. It may be hard and skilful. All in all, we must hope that our essential farming community continues to serve us with excellent local produce, at a time when overseas supplies may be limited or non-existent.

While not able to meet any of you face to face, I would like to assure you that I am available through the usual channels, and can offer help in a variety of circumstances, where the county is concerned.

### **Appendix 2 - MHDC Councillor Report Cllr. Cumming.**

MHDC have been working closely with the other Worcestershire councils in dealing with the COVID19 crisis. The key areas have been in dealing with the homeless and ensuring a comprehensive database of those aiding the vulnerable across the District. The council has been responsible for making grant payments to all qualifying businesses occupying property as soon as possible. As bank details were not available for many businesses who have a nil rates bill and HMRC had unhelpfully announced that everyone would receive their grant payment automatically, a major exercise of contacting such businesses had to be undertaken. To date 80 % of those qualifying has been paid. A further, far smaller, scheme has been introduced to help those who missed out on the first scheme to cover such businesses as those in shared offices, B+B's and businesses with slightly higher rates bills. The criteria are currently being worked on and I have been in contact with the finance department to give input on this and the type of businesses that need assistance.

Council meetings have just resumed in virtual form, mainly by phone conference calls and lessons are being learnt as to how to improve them. Meetings by Zoom are also due to start shortly.

On the financial side the Council is facing shortfalls in income from such areas as fees and parking charges and there will be problems due to the closure of leisure

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centres and the Theatres. A grant of £800,000 is being received from the Government but losses are expected to exceed this.

There are concerns from local publicans about the threat to their businesses from continued lockdown and future social distancing measures. I organised a Zoom meeting involving representatives of several local pubs and Harriet Baldwin which was a good opportunity to detail the messages that need to go to the government.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Chairman's Annual Report – Cllr. Catherine Knight.**

##### **Chairman's Annual Report to Abberley Parish - 20th May 2020**

Although the AGM, elections and Annual Parish Meeting are postponed until next year I thought that it would be of benefit to give an account of the Parish Council activities to date.

This will certainly be known to future generations as the time of Covid as the effect of the virus on the whole world has been staggering; not a single person on the planet has escaped the consequences both social and economic. It has certainly propelled Abberley and many other Councils into the world of Zoom meetings and finding different ways to communicate without putting ourselves and others at risk. After a certain amount of trepidation I think we can say that we have embraced the new way of doing things. How long that will last is a matter of speculation but, as a tool, I think virtual meetings are here to stay.

The year began uneventfully enough with the Parish Council conducting business as usual in matters preoccupying any rural Parish – flooding, pollution, overgrown hedges, litter, the inevitable Planning issues and, specifically to us, trying to assist Astley and Dunley Parish Council in combatting the illegal use of Shaver's End Quarry.

We were delighted to welcome Mr Joel Turvey as the new Head of Abberley Parochial VC Primary School who began his tenure with a very firm wish to cement relations between the school and Abberley.

There was a Security Marking Event in September which was a very interesting exercise in how to make our belongings more secure.

We also held an extremely well attended community dance and hog roast in September in the Village Hall – the Abberley Shindig – a wonderful Ceilidh. Many thanks go to Cllr Jim Gibson, Lisa Walker and Sarah Crabbe for organising a memorable evening.

We also took that opportunity to advertise the thriving clubs and groups and committees manned by dedicated volunteers who contribute so much to Abberley life. And it was also another chance to publicise the progress of our then nascent NDP (Neighbourhood Development Plan).

A glorious day in October saw an army of volunteers striding through Abberley and its environs wielding grabbers and bin bags; our version of the Great British Tidy Up. The Abberley NDP is now ready to present for an eight-week Public Consultation after which the final draft will be written, ready for examination.

Cllr Kate Andrew stepped down as Chair of the Steering/Working Group and I want to thank her for the years of hard work that have gone in to getting us to this stage.

Cllr Jim Gibson resigned from his role as Path Warden, due to work commitments and I would like to thank him for tackling quite a time-consuming task so diligently – Abberley has many, many paths. Cllr Andrew has volunteered to take his place.

At this point I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the life of the Parish in so many different ways and are continuing to do so; our County Councillor, Dr Pollock, and our District Councillor, Mr Paul Cumming, for their presence and approachability, always ready to answer those difficult questions and to point us in the right direction; and indeed all the Parish Councillors who have taken on various roles and responsibilities, doggedly pursuing what they believe to be in the best interests of the Parish.

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A special mention must go to our Lengthsman, Mr Chris Bunn, who as usual has kept Abberley looking its best.

And last but not least I would like to thank Mrs Carole Hirst, our Parish Clerk, whose advice, dedication and hard work have ensured the smooth running of Parish business especially at a time when the world as we knew it went topsy turvy.

Chairman.....

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