

Abberley Parish Council – Chair’s Annual Report 2025–2026

As Chair of Abberley Parish Council, I am pleased to present this report on the Council’s activities over the past year. It has been a period of continued community involvement, practical improvements and ongoing work to address the issues that matter most to our residents.

Community Improvements

A key highlight of the year has been the continued development of Apostles Meadow. Supported by Section 106 funding and external grants, significant progress has been made.

Works have included tree, shrub and hedgerow planting, wildflower and grass seeding, woodland management and habitat improvements, including features to support birds and bats. Access improvements have also begun, including pathways and entrance works to support wider community use.

Community involvement has been central to the success of this project. Volunteers have supported planting and maintenance throughout the year, including a community planting day, during which approximately 140 trees were planted.

With thanks to Catherine Knight and Meryl Roberts for hosting a tabletop Apostles Meadow display at the Village Christmas Fayre and to Cllr Eberlin and Julie Granger for their contribution and continued commitment to this community project, which includes regular updates in the Abberley Parish News.

Governance, Finance and Parish Responsibilities

Alongside these environmental improvements, the Parish Council has continued to manage its wider responsibilities, including oversight of parish finances, governance, and policy development. This has included approving annual accounts and governance statements, adopting updated policies, and introducing an investment strategy to ensure funds are managed effectively for the benefit of the community.

The Council has also managed a range of funding streams and provided grants to support local organisations and community initiatives.

Community Safety and Local Issues

Speeding remains a key issue within the parish, and the Council has worked with Worcestershire County Council and the police to pursue improved enforcement and longer-term solutions including vehicle activate signs(VAS).

Parking issues, particularly around Abberley Primary School and Apostles Oak, have been addressed through engagement with enforcement teams and police, including targeted patrols and community engagement.

Flooding and drainage remain ongoing concerns in parts of the parish, and we will continue to work with partners to push for improvements.

Additional practical improvements have included the installation of a litter bin outside the Post Office and ongoing maintenance throughout the parish via the Lengthsman Scheme.

Community and Local Events

Abberley continues to be a parish rich in community spirit. We thank the many local organisations and volunteers who contribute to village life. From coffee mornings and fundraising events to the annual gardening show and other local activities, these groups play a vital role in community wellbeing and connection.

The Parish Council has supported a number of these activities through grants and practical assistance, helping to sustain the wide range of opportunities available to residents through community groups.

As always, these organisations rely heavily on volunteers, and we encourage anyone who is able to consider getting involved.

Parish Council Changes

The Council formally noted the resignation and bid a fond farewell to long-serving councillor Tony Eden following his move out of the parish in December 2025. The Council extends its sincere thanks for his many years of dedication and service to the community.

This month we acknowledge the resignation of Cllr Samantha Oakes, whose insight into village life has been really helpful and we look forward to her continued support and advocacy on behalf of the community.

We also welcomed Councillor Godfrey Crompton to the Parish Council earlier in the year, a returning councillor. These changes ensure we continue to bring a range of perspectives and experience to the Council's work.

Wider Engagement and Partnerships

The Parish Council has continued to work closely with Worcestershire County Council, Malvern Hills District Council and local policing teams throughout the year.

This has included engagement on highways improvements, local government reorganisation proposals, flooding, planning matters and wider community safety issues.

These partnerships are essential in ensuring that the needs of our parish are represented and that we are able to access support and funding where possible, with particular thanks to Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Lee Durrant and Councillor Justin Bowen, whose support has been invaluable.

Community and Local Events

Abberley continues to be a parish rich in community spirit and we thank the many local organisations that contribute to the life and vitality of our village, so a big thank you must go to all those who willingly give up their spare time to keep these organisations running. However, more volunteers are always needed so please keep that in mind, we thank them for providing reports on their activities that will be shared in the minutes from this meeting.

From pop up coffee mornings to the annual gardening show, their work supports everything from education and conservation to community connection and wellbeing.

Looking Ahead

A key focus for the coming year will be the review of the Abberley Neighbourhood Plan led on behalf of the council by Councillor Mike Birchall. This remains an important tool in shaping the future of our parish reflecting the needs and aspirations of all who live here as we continue to manage growth and preserve what makes Abberley such a special place to live.

We will also continue to build on the progress made at Apostles Meadow, respond to local concerns, and deliver improvements that support both the environment and the day-to-day experience of living in the parish.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

I would like to thank our District Councillors, Paul and Pam Cumming, and our County Councillor, Justin Bowen, for their continued support and engagement over the past year.

I would also like to thank all Parish Councillors for their time, commitment and dedication. A great deal of work takes place behind the scenes, and while we are not always able to achieve everything we set out to do, we work hard to ensure that the best interests of the whole community remain at the heart of our decisions.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank everyone in the community who has supported our work throughout the year, whether by attending meetings, providing feedback, volunteering or taking part in local events and initiatives.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Parish Clerk, Carole, for her ongoing hard work, professionalism and support. Her contribution is essential to the smooth and effective running of the Parish Council.

That concludes my Annual Report for the year 2025_26

Libby Tassell

Chair, Abberley Parish Council