

The MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the Parish of Abberley at Abberley Village Hall

Held at 7pm on Wednesday 20th May 2026

Present: Cllr. Tassell (Chairman), Cllr. Ballard, Cllr. Birchall, Cllr. Doyle, Cllr. Eberlin; Cllr. Eden, Cllr. Field, Cllr. Jukes and Cllr. Oakes.

In Attendance: (Carole Hirst), Clerk and 2 members of the public. Cllr. Justin Bowen WCC: Cllr. Paul Cumming and Cllr. Pam Cumming MHDC

1. **Welcome & Introduction:** Cllr. Tassell

2. **Abberley Reports:**

2.a.i **Abberley Pre-School –**

No report received.

2. a.ii. **Abberley C of E Primary School –**

At Abberley Parochial V.C. Primary School, our daily life is rooted in our vision: to **Love, Grow, and Flourish Together**.

This vision is more than just words on a wall; it is the heartbeat of our school. To Love means we prioritise kindness and belonging, ensuring every child feels valued as a unique individual. To Grow reflects our commitment to curiosity and resilience, as our pupils navigate their learning with confidence. Finally, to Flourish Together captures our ultimate goal—that our children do not just succeed academically, but develop the character and spirit to contribute positively to our wider community and the world beyond.

This vision has been in vibrant action throughout the past year. We have seen relationships blossom through our Year 6 "buddy system," where our oldest pupils support our youngest, and our "Happy Lunchtime" initiative, which encourages play across all year groups. Our House competitions in singing, sport, and art continue to enrich the "whole child." We are proud that our music provision has been awarded the 'Music Mark,' reflecting our ongoing investment in our pupils' creative development.

We aim for every child to represent Abberley in a sporting tournament during their time here. This year, that dedication resulted in "silverware" across football, hockey, netball, and rounders. We are also incredibly proud to have once again been awarded the School Games Mark Gold Award.

Growing children's minds and curiosity. This year, pupils have explored what spirituality means to them, reflecting on our place within God's wonderful world. We have strengthened our community links by pupils leading services for Remembrance, Harvest, Christmas, and Easter alongside Rev'd David and Tobias. Looking ahead, we are excited to launch joint biodiversity projects between the school grounds and St. Mary's Church.

In the classroom, our staff has been busy developing the curriculum, with a particular focus on our new approach to writing. There is a visible "buzz" of excitement as pupils engage with new class texts and bring their ideas to life on paper.

These efforts are reflected in our academic results. Our Key Stage 2 statutory assessments for reading, writing, and maths combined are above the national average. Additionally, 100% of our Year 1 pupils passed their Phonics Screening Check, and our Reception pupils exceeded national averages for "Good Level of Development."

Our pupils have been active ambassadors in the village, hosting a successful Macmillan Coffee Morning and helping plant the new "Orchard Community" area in Abberley. Further afield, our Key Stage 2 pupils grew their independence during school residentials, and our choir performed beautifully at the Royal Three Counties Show. We also continue to work closely with Abberley Pre-school on collaborative events and we were delighted to hear of their recent award.

None of this would be possible without the hard work of our staff, the engagement of our pupils, and the support of our parents and the wider community. We are especially grateful to the Friends' Association; their fantastic social events have brought joy to families and funded the transformation of our school hall, restoring it to its former glory

It has been a wonderful year of loving, growing, and flourishing together.

2.a.iii Abberley Young Farmers Association-

No report received

2.a.iv Nora Parsons Day Centre – Ian Brown

The Committee are delighted to announce that the Christmas Fair held on 22nd December raised £2,350.00. This was the result of a monumental effort by the Volunteers and the amazing generosity of all our supporters. The sum raised will contribute not only to our weekly meetings, but to the funding of our annual outing, the exercise lady's regular visits, the wonderful singalongs provided by Anthony, visits by the Chiropodist and the other extra treats supplied throughout the year. With the rising costs that everyone is facing we appreciate everyone's efforts to enable us to keep offering this service to the Community.

We are also extremely grateful Parish Councils who offer support through an annual grant and to other local organisations and individuals, in lauding our Patron Dame Harriett Baldwin, who are kind enough to donate to this local charity supporting those who are lonely and enjoy company, those who struggle on their own as well as some who are becoming forgetful. As well as supporting its Members it enables their carers to have a short break one day each week which is equally valuable.

So, an enormous thank you to everyone who contributed in any way at all,

2.a.v Abberley Green Trust- Tony Hewitt

The village green is a well-used space in the centre of the village, the perfect place to walk the dog, play with children or just be alone with your thoughts.

The Charitable Trust that looks after the green was established in 1994 and the original trustees/stakeholders included the Parish Council, the Church/PCC, and the School, later Abberley Gardening Club, Village Hall and Abberley Hills Preservation Society were added. Some of these bodies had not put forward a trustee or attended the AGM for a number of years. Prior to the last AGM they were all approached to put forward a trustee.

We currently have representation from; Parish Council, Abberley Hills Preservation Society, Abberley Gardening Club, and Abberley Village Hall. Other bodies did not respond, we resolved not proactively chase these other bodies, but we are very happy for them to be involved in the future should they wish.

The green continues to be maintained by a small group of volunteers, most of who are also the trustees, this is not a requirement, and we welcome anybody who has a few hours to help maintain the green.

This year we have planted (re-planted) a wildflower patch from the gate to the oak tree and will be keeping some of the grass longer again to encourage wildlife and pollinators.

We keep our expenses low and broadly annual donations match expenses, however we are not immune to inflation in our expenses such as fuel and insurance. We thank the Parish Council for their

annual donation, we will likely be looking at ways that we can enable users to easily make a donation in the future.

2.a.vi Abberley Parochial Church Council – Bill Ballard

Churchwardens Report May 2026

Pastoral

During the year we continued to have services at St Mary's and St Michael's on alternate Sundays. St Mary's service starting at 11.00 am and St Michael's at 6,00 pm.

Numbers attending remained steady throughout the year with an average attendance at St Mary's of 15 and at St Michael's 8.

We had a particularly busy period leading up Christmas with large numbers attending Carol Services from Abberley Primary School together with their parents filling the church on numerous occasions. We also had the annual carol service with Abberley Young Farmers which was well attended. Overall this resulted in 425 people attending St Mary's during Advent

Each month the coffee and cake mornings continued to be held in St Mary's by the Abberley Care Farm with on-going success

Abberley WI continued to hire St Mary's for their craft group, on a monthly basis.

During the year we had four weddings and eight funerals services of various sorts.

Structural

Both churches had quinquennial reviews during the year, which resulted in a to do list over the next few years

In the St Mary's quinquennial review there were listed eleven items for immediate attention, five items have been completed and seven still to do

In the St Michaels quinquennial review four items were listed of which two have been done.

At St Mary's, all the downpipes were repaired and repainted. A new lapel mike was purchased and installed to replace the old one which was mislaid. We also purchased a new electronic keyboard for the church as a back up for the ailing organ.

At St Michael's the entrance ceiling was redone and the entrance door was repainted also a gutter was repaired

2.a.vii Abberley Village Hall – Sarah Coley

We have once again had a busy year at the Hall. We are constantly trying to update the facilities we offer, and it was decided that the kitchen should be the focus for 2025.

We applied for lottery funding in order to cover the majority of the cost. We were successful with our bid, and then the race was on to get the work completed over the school summer holidays in order to minimise the disruption to our regular hires.

While we were having the new kitchen fitted we decided to maximise the storage space and to update the dishwasher, fridge and the microwaves.

We chose a more modern style and the work was completed in good time, with a lot of help from the members of the village hall committee, John Coley and the ladies from the W.I.

We are really pleased with the result and as we know that the kitchen is a vital part of the Hall for most bookings, we are sure that it will be used by and will benefit many people.

We continue to have bookings for weddings, parties and caravan clubs throughout the year, and of course the award winning preschool remains one of our most regular hires, along with the village school.

We are always open to new committee members, and we have been lucky with the addition of a few new faces to the committee, and some have taken on the roles of officers, and therefore securing the future running of our beautiful hall.

2.a.viii Hester Severne Trust –

TRUSTEES :

Mrs M Nott

Mr B Ballard

Mr N Crabbe

In March 2020 the charity contributed £60,000 to the cost of a new classroom at Abberley C of E Primary School.

No amounts have been distributed since then and there have been no requests for any further financial help.

The remaining funds are being invested and amount to £52,000 in Feb 2026

2.a.ix District Councillor's Report- Cllrs. Paul and Pam Cumming

We have provided over £5m for community infrastructure improvements, including new facilities at Malvern Town Football Club, Upton Rugby Club and the Tunnel Hill Centre. We have invested heavily in virtually every Ward in MHDC to improve community and sports facilities.

We have invested over £1m in local businesses, enabling them to invest in growing their business, but fund matching on infrastructure investment. This has included things such as improving shop fronts, investing in kitchens, etc. There is another £500k available for the next financial year.

We are investing in our Communities, with a further £1m allocated including provision for Mental Health, Community hubs, and a grant of £160k for Community Action, securing their funding for the next four years after MHDC has gone. Community Action provide essential travel for old and less able people, and in our rural community this is critical. Our funding secures this service.

We are investing in our refuse collection service, which is the best in the County. To do this, we bought a building next to our depot to allow the service to expand, meaning we are the first in the County to be able to start collecting Food Waste.

We have finally implemented the SWDP, which protects our countryside from un-scheduled development. This includes ensuring our rules exist long after MHDC is dissolved.

Introduced a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy with a focus on prevention.

Enabled, and then took over the new Worcestershire sports park at Lower Broadheath which includes football pitches, basketball and tennis courts, a new sports hall and country and nature facilities including a skateboard area.

And this was all done with no increase to Council Tax.

2.a. x County Councillors Report – Cllr. Justin Bowen

Worcestershire County Council Matters

This financial year has been perhaps the most challenging that Worcestershire County Council has ever faced. With a debt of more than £600 million, a budget deficit of nearly £50 million, and just 2

weeks of emergency reserves remaining, the Council was on the bring of a S.114 notice, the Local Authority equivalent of bankruptcy.

This led to drastic measures being needed, one of which was to increase Council Tax by 8.98% for 2026/27.

However, alongside this, work has been going on to address some of the structural problems that had led to this situation.

In the directorate for which I am responsible as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, transformation has taken place to address the £60+ million bill being paid every year to private companies to look after Worcestershire children in care.

Following investment in our Worcestershire Fostering service, alongside a complete restructuring of how the service functions, we've managed to increase the number of our own foster carers by nearly 20%, bucking the national trend of decline and going a long way to reversing a fall of 40% over the previous 5 years. This has helped us save more than £12 million in placement costs, up by 30% on the previous year.

Similar changes are coming to both Adult Social Care and Highways over the coming months, as part of a full Transformation Plan for the Council. More details of this will be announced soon.

With the government also due to announce its decision for Worcestershire under Local Government Reorganisation, the year ahead is likely to be the most important one for our county for decades.

Tenbury Division Matters

This year has again been dominated by flooding, roads and community matters.

Flooding

In October, I attended and addressed the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee meeting where £1.8 million was put back into the programme budget for the Tenbury Wells Property Flood Resilience scheme. This was a huge relief, but of course the work now continues to get the scheme implemented. That is the challenge for the months ahead.

I've also been working with the coordinators of the Tenbury Wells Flood Warden Scheme which will be launched soon. This scheme will be another crucial part of flood defence and will show how our community is doing everything we can to protect ourselves – particularly important when it comes to seeking funding in future. To support this, I've connected the coordinators with officers in Highways so that the scheme joins up with County Council flood planning. This is a big step in making sure flood response runs smoothly. I'll also be seeking funding for protective equipment for the scheme's volunteers. More news on this in the months ahead.

Roads

Speeding traffic remains a major problem on many of our roads. Alongside this, speed limits are often felt to be inappropriate for rural roads. Some progress has been made in specific areas, including funding for new Vehicle Activated Signs in places such as Pensax and Great Witley, alongside improved signage in places such as Abberley.

However, the issue remains that County Council policy is driven purely by data, with no consideration of impact on quality of life. In rural areas we often don't have sufficient data to support changes, and this is something I've been trying to address since my election last May.

So, I'm happy to say that that I've now secured agreement from the new Cabinet Member for Highways that there will be a comprehensive review of policy. I have also secured support from Councillors from other rural areas across Worcestershire. My aim for this year is that we will finally achieve the objective that our community will have a much bigger say on the speed limits on our roads. I will provide updates on this as it progresses.

Potholes have continued to plague our area, although as a community we've made significant progress in getting Highways to act by reporting them. More than 50 reports have been placed on the Worcestershire Portal for both potholes and blocked drains, and where residents have shared their reports we've been able to get Highways to act. We need to continue this proactive approach.

In February, I spoke at the full County Council meeting in favour of £1 million being ringfenced for rural road maintenance and improvements and was delighted that it was agreed for this year. It's the first time I can recall money being specifically set aside for rural roads, although now the task is to ensure we get our share!

Community

This year, I've allocated nearly £10,000 for local projects and organisations, including The Regal Theatre, Tenbury Scout & Guides Group, Teme Valley Wildlife, Stoke Bliss Defibrillator, Great Witley Parish Council, The Shelsleys Village Hall, Tenbury Christmas Lights, Tenbury Primary School and We Are Men United.

Alongside this, I've worked with Worcestershire's Public Health team to secure more than £20,000 to local Health & Well-being projects, including at Tenbury Community Pool, Kyre Riding for the Disabled and Tenbury United Youth Football, amongst many other projects.

Finally, in March and after conversations with local traders, I launched my campaign "Its Time for Free Parking in Tenbury Wells".

I know from when I had my own business that removing barriers to visitors spending time in a town is one of the most important ways of increasing footfall and spending. There are many factors that affect this, but it can be summarised as marketing, parking and signage.

I have therefore written to the leader of Malvern Hills District Council to make the case that Tenbury Wells deserves special treatment when it comes to free parking and requesting that MHDC Teme Street car park is made free at least until September.

Alongside this I have raised with Worcestershire County Council that the waiting time on Teme Street and Market Street be increased from 45 minutes to 90 minutes – providing a balance between allowing longer stays with not clogging up parking. This has been provisionally approved, and consultation will now take place ahead of implementing a new Traffic Regulation Order.

Together, I think these measures can help provide a desperately needed boost to trade in the town.

There are many challenges facing our rural community, but I believe that over this last year we have made a start in addressing them. I look forward to continuing that work over the year ahead.

2. a. xi Abberley Care Farm – Claire Furness

We are still very busy on our little farm. The pop-up teasshop in St Marys is continuing to be well supported and we thank everyone who comes along and also bakes cakes, it all makes a very cheerful church! We have made good friends with both pre-school and Abberley Primary school and they enjoy coming to the teasshop which is lovely to have lots of generations joining together.

2026 has already brought lots of fun and entertainment for the children and staff on our farm, we have recently had Stan and Bill, our cade lambs join the team which are proving a big hit as well as needing the children to learn lots of new skills from bottle feeding to building fences and a sheep shelter.

A lot of our children have been with us a while now and are doing animal care qualifications as well as learning life skills and we were very proud to present some of them with their ACF Horse Care Bronze Awards medals at our March pop up teasshop. We are also still doing our bit in the community with litter picks, cleaning St Marys church and keeping up with seasonal displays in church.

We continue to support approximately 8 children each weekday term time, lots are local children, many are suffering with high anxiety, Autism, ADHD, social and emotional trauma and need animal

assisted interventions to help them regain the confidence to access education. We have good links with The Chantry, Tenbury High and Bewdley High schools. Our staff are all local.

As we all spring into summer, we wish you health and happiness and look forward to seeing you all around the village.

2. a. xii West Mercia Police Annual Report -PCSO Lee Durrant

Martley & Tenbury Safer Neighbourhood Team

Last 30 days of incidents reported to police as at 29/4/2026

| Category of Incident | Martley & Tenbury SNT Area (A) | Stoke Bliss (B) | Pensax (C) | Little Witley (D) | Abberley (E) |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Anti-social Behaviour - All Categories | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Burglary - Residential | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Unlisted Crime | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Criminal Damage | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Making off without payment | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Public Order | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shoplifting | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Theft of Vehicle | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Animals & Wildlife | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Concern for Safety | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Missing Person | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Suspicious Circumstances | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Road Traffic Collision with injury | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Highways disruption | 13 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Traffic Offence | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Road Traffic Collision - Damage Only | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

The position for the Martley & Tenbury SNT Area as a whole over the past 30 days is shown in column (A) for comparative purposes. There were 54 incidents reported to police during this period. Please note that for data protection purposes some categories of crime are not included in the above figures.

There were no incidents reported to police for the Stoke Bliss area in the same 30 day period.

There was only 1 incident reported to police for the Pensax area during the 30 day period. This was an incident of anti-social behaviour.

There were 3 incidents reported in the Little Witley area over the 30 day period. 1 incident of Highway Disruption and 2 road traffic collisions that involved damage only.

There were 2 incidents reported in Abberley over the 30 day period. 1 incident of 'Unlisted Crime' and 1 involving a missing person.

2. a. xiii Abberley Women's Institute Annual Report

Abberley WI continues to meet on the second Wednesday every month and enjoy to a wide membership from the village and beyond.

Interesting speakers have entertained the group ranging from a talk from a local First Attender, a foster carer, the tale of a suffragette princess, ukele and jive lessons, a fully costumed speech from Henry the Eighth to Limerick composers and many more.

The WI has a book group, a walking group and a Bridge group.

The group enjoys visits out to local museums and places such as to Waddesden Manor, Spetchley Gardens and The Red House Cone.

Meetings are relaxed convivial and enjoyable. No obligation to sing, bake or make jam!

2. a. xiv Teme Valley Neighbourhood Watch Annual Report from Ning Kedwards.

Teme Valley Neighbourhood Watch annual report May 2026

Inspector James Ashton of the North Herefordshire and Malvern Hills Safer Neighbourhood Team is responsible for the combined Herefordshire and Worcestershire local policing areas, formerly known as Herefordshire & Worcestershire separately. This new structure is designed to strengthen resilience, improve coordination and ensure resources are focused where they are needed most. We now have a team of 3 Safer Neighbourhood Watch Officers and 4 PCs (Police Constables) covering the combined areas. There have been increased Community engagements throughout the year including engagement vans visiting various villages, farm visits and speed enforcements in villages and towns.

Rural crimes continue to be evident in our areas. There were targeted burglaries in our villages which include thefts of cars, quad bikes, jewellery, oil and garden tools etc.. There were also economic crimes caused by online scams. It is very important not to pass on personal details and financial information to any one who have not been vetted correctly.

As more and more people are using social media, please ensure your privacy settings are set properly to ensure only people you wish to see your posts are the ones who see your posts.

One final point, as the weather improves, please ensure we respect open water areas like Shavers End Quarry to ensure no accidents happen.

For your information, the officers who support our community are:

PC Smith, Safer Neighbourhood Watch Officer; PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) Partridge; PCSO Durrant; PC Steras; PC Teale; PC Hand and PC Jones.

Report prepared by Ning Kedwards

Teme Valley Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator

2. a. xv Abberley Hills Preservation Society – Carolyn Coles - Chair

AGM – 11TH MAY 2026 _CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

MEMBERSHIP

Membership numbers continue to increase steadily, thanks to the hard work of Tom and Pam.

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Executive Members are generally held every other month on the second Monday of the month whenever possible (eg weather permitting).

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE STATUS

The application to Natural England is an ongoing process, on which we continue to work. Thank you to Lisa for her continuing work on this, mainly this year in contacting relevant authorities at Natural England.

EVENTS

The “Ghost Talk” event was held on October 30th at the Manor. This was a resounding success- various ghost stories from the village, collated from reports/stories from many sources, mainly members, was narrated by Morgan, in character and costume as a Victorian storyteller. The evening was excellent and enjoyed by all. Jane and her staff at the Manor organised and provided a lovely buffet. A great deal of positive feedback has been received. We hope to repeat this success with a similar event in the future.

The litter picking initiative around the area has continued. Well done to John for his regular clean-ups by the Quarry.

PLANNING

It gives me much pleasure to report that AHPS have had little to do on this subject this year. Long may this continue, though of course we continue to work to support local villagers should the need arise.

LINKS

I attended the Village Green Meeting in June this year. Thank you to Fred for putting himself forward as AHPS representative for this Committee. Between us we will continue to attend and support this group. We decided at a recent Meeting that a one-off financial donation from AHPS would be given to the Village Green Trust.

It is also pleasing to continue support for the upkeep of St Michael's Church. Tom is the Churchwarden, and has reported his thanks for support from AHPS. Renovation work on the roof, ceiling, gutters and drainage etc, has continued for over 7 years. Members have also attended working parties to help with mowing and general maintenance of the Church grounds. Thanks are reciprocated to Tom.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thank you to all members of the Executive Committee for all their hard work over the past 12 months- Tom Herbert (Vice Chair); Lisa Walker (Secretary); Pam Perfect (Treasurer); John Rossbotham and Fred Shellis, and to John and Jeanette, and also to Lisa for their hospitality in hosting the Meetings.

2. a. xvi Guide Leader – Debbie Norkett

No report received.

2. a. xvii Fishing Club – David Yemm - Chair

Abberley Anglers had a successful 2025 season with good fishing on the Inkpot in the grounds of Abberley Hall Estate.

Unsurprisingly with the drought conditions water levels in the Inkpot were at their lowest ever but nature has provided and reset with a wet start to 2026 meaning the level is back to where it should be.

The regular fixture list of matches was well attended with competitions on the Inkpot and several away venues, including the River Avon at Twinning, popular with the membership.

In early 2026 there was a further stocking of crucian carp along with mirror and common carp into the Inkpot.

The 2026 competition season started in April and there will be matches every other weekend with the final match in November.

In 2025 the club had 23 members, there are places available should anglers wish to join.

Dave Yemm, Chairman, Abberley Anglers

2. a. xviii Gardening Club – Dave Yemm

No report received.

3. Annual Report of Abberley Parish Council – Cllr Libby Tassell (Chair)

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

Apostles Meadow Annual Report

We have made good progress on managing the woodland and meadow improvements. We were successful in obtaining a second Nature Networks grant for just over £5,000 towards tree coppicing, field access improvements, meadow seed and ecotone trees. The parish council has to contribute 30% to the project costs.

Dave Smith won the 3 year tender to coppice ash trees suffering from ash dieback. This creates space in the woodland for natural light, letting the other trees recover and self seeded trees to find a space. They have created some natural bat bird nesting spaces with creative tree surgery and left woodchip for us to use.

The access road suffers from deep mud causing difficulty for pedestrians to use the public footpath so some of the surface soil was scraped back with some recycled scalpings/aggregate to reduce the mud. It is likely that this will need to be topped up at some stage in the future. A wide wooden gate for machinery access and a pedestrian gate has been installed.

The Ecotone trees along the top edge of the field were planted with help from the Apostle's Meadow Support Volunteers. These are a mixture of native trees and some shrubs to create a connecting habitat between the field and woodland for wildlife. The intention is to leave these areas to grow wild and coppice if necessary in the future.

Lastly we have sown some yellow rattle in the autumn and wildflower mix in the spring to try to start a meadow. We have dug out some of the re-emerging thistles and we'll cut these areas if there are too many.

We did have some problems with dog waste in the crescent shrubby zones already planted when the school group were helping, so we will now ask all dog owners to respect that the space is for everyone. The school would like to use the space for activities and dog waste is a nuisance to volunteers and is a health hazard to children. All dog waste should be collected and put in the bin at the road entrance and keep dogs under control or on a lead on the paths. We will be putting some signs up to request this and explain why.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all our volunteers and the children and teachers from Abberley Primary School who have helped plant trees and maintain the new hedges. Thanks to Julie Grainger for help liaising with the school and leading a group to plant trees and spread seed. The Abberley Preservation Society have also kindly donated a cherry tree - a site still to be chosen. We are also grateful to receive some funding from The Bell Community Fund for £900 which we will put towards benches or other items needed.

Looking ahead I will be looking for more funding opportunities to help with meadow seed, coppicing work and other jobs. We still need to purchase benches and maybe picnic benches where the land is suitable. Hopefully this summer we can enjoy the space and benefit from some meadow flowers. I have seen owls and a red kite hunting above the new hedge.

If anyone wants to volunteer or just know what's happening please ask to join the Volunteers' group on WhatsApp. We still need help with a few thistles and spreading the woodchip for mulch! Thanks to everyone – it's great to see the paths and space used so widely.

The Meeting Concluded at 19:22