

The Minutes of Abberley Parish Council
Held At Abberley Village Hall Committee Meeting Room at 7.30pm on Wednesday 18th July, 2018

Present: Cllr R T Nott (Chair) Cllr C Knight (Vice Chairman), Cllr G Crompton, Cllr A Eden, Cllr J Gibson, Cllr K Andrew, Cllr N Kedwards

In Attendance: Clerk, Mrs P Taylor, Mrs S Coley (representing Abberley Village Hall Management Committee) and members of the Public.

- Item
066 Apologies Cllr R Goodman and Cllr A Jukes had previously advised the Council that there were unable to attend this meeting. County Council Dr K Pollock and County Councillor P Cumming had also sent their apologies.
- 067 Declarations of Interest No Declarations of Interest were received.
- 068 Minutes The minutes of the annual meetings of both the Parish of Abberley and of Abberley Parish Council, both held on 16th May, 2018.
- 069 Reports (District and Council Councillors) The reports made available to the meeting are appended to these minutes.
- 070 Adjournment The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow for Public Question Time, aide memoire notes on the items brought forward are appended to these minutes.
- At the end of the allotted time, the Chairman resumed the meeting.
- 071 Abberley Village Hall Management Committee (AVHMC) The Council debated the proposal put forward by the AVHMC in their letter of 20th March, 2018.
- Cllr Andrew cautioned that care should be taken to fully understand what the implications of having the Parish Council itself named as the “default” Management Committee for the Village Hall before any vote was taken.
- Cllr Eden brought the motion, seconded by Cllr Crompton, that the Parish Council should be prepared to be named as replacement to the AVHMC in the event of the potential dissolution of the AVHMC and Finance Committee to the Parish Council agreeing the wording of such an amendment to the AVHMC’s own constitution.
- This motion was carried, with Cllrs Eden, Crompton, Nott, Kedwards and Knight voting for and Cllr Andrew voting against.

Chairman

Date

- 072 Progress Reports
- a. Neighbourhood Watch (Cllr Kedwards)
Bank Lane thefts continue and have the appearance of being organised/thefts to order. CCTV on the public highways has been proposed. The local police officer is prepared to visit the area and talk to residents, with the date to be advised. More generally Teme Valley has seen a huge increase in thefts from gardens and outbuildings.
 - b. Cross Parish Council Working Group A443 Issues (Cllr Kedwards)
An engineering review of the options for this stretch of road is being undertaken by Ian Bentham (Transport and Infrastructure Commissioning Team). This is required prior to lobbying the local West Worcestershire Member of Parliament.
 - c. Neighbourhood Plan (Steering Committee Representative)
The first stage grant has been approved and should be received by the Parish Council shortly.
 - d. General Data Protection Regulations
Due to the similarity in operations of Abberley Parish Council and Little Witley Parish Council and the cross-parish skill base available, the two Parish Council's planned to work together to produce the rolling audit review required by the GDPR. Cllr Knight would represent Abberley and Cllr J Geach would represent Little Witley. A joint meeting would be set up as soon as possible.
- 073 Highways
- WCC would continue to be chased to deal with the danger to traffic presented by the overhanging vegetation by Beehive.
- The new Lengthsman was to be sent an invitation to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss his views on maintenance etc in the area.
- 074 Planning
- The Elms (hotel) continues to show as pending decision.
Bank Farm, access issues have delayed the inspection of this proposal.
- 075 Lengthsman
- Abberley Parish Council have been advised of no issues following a spot inspection of the Lengthsmans Scheme (paperwork/claims and actually work itself inspected in the Parish).
- A branch needs to be cleared from the footway close to Apostles Oak Cottage
- Cllr Andrew reported a tree growing in the footway which needed removal and she would advise exact location.

Chairman Date

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- 076 Finance
- a. The Parish Council delegated powers for approval of payments made under the self-funding lengthsman's scheme to the 2018-2019 Finance Committee, subject to the pre-approval of the Lengthsman's Timesheets by both the Clerk and the responsible Councillor, Trevor Nott.
 - b. All outstanding items under the AGAR Part 2 audit had been completed in a timely manner and now the report from PKF Littlejohn's was awaited in due course.
 - c. The Clerk gave confirmation of Expenditure and receipts for the 2018-19 Financial Year to date (12.d)
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| Payment | |
| Grants – Royal British Legion | -£30.00 |
| Insurance – BHIB Ltd | -£336.40 |
| IT – Upperbridge Enterprises | -£219.17 |
| Staff & Office Costs – K Wild | -£1502.52 |
| Receipts | |
| Precept – 1 st Instalment | -£4,600.00 |
| Interest – Bank | £2.56 |
| APC | -£131.00 |
- d. Payment approval was given for the WORCS CALC and NALC subscriptions for the financial year 2018-19 in the sum of £363.00 + VAT, as the increase had exceeded the anticipated sum included in the budget (12d) by £2.87
- 077 Councillors Report
- Recruiting new volunteers to committees and other bodies in the Parish.
- The ongoing issue of recruiting and retaining volunteers to the various committees and other bodies in the Parish was discussed. It was felt that recruitment options were not fully exhausted and Councillors also looked extensively possible options for assisting AVHMC and others in their recruitment drive.
- Cllr Jim Gibson and Cllr Catherine Knight felt that a multi-group recruitment drive in the village would be a good initiative to stage in order to encourage more residents to get involve with the wide range of amenity providing groups within the Parish.
- 078 Clerks Report
- Abberley Hall School had made a request to the Parish Council for a multi-faceted approach to the problem of dog waste not been picked up by dog walkers in and around the grounds of the school. Although it is not the responsibility of the Parish Council to fund the bins, emptying service, patrol etc that had been requested the Clerk had provided the Bursar with extensive information to enable to School to move forward in addressing their concerns.
- 079 Date of next meeting
- The next meeting of the Parish Council was confirmed as Wednesday 19th September 2018 at 7.30pm in the Committee Meeting Room of Abberley Village Hall.

Chairman

Date

Appendices

069 Reports from County and District Councillors

ABBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 18.07.18 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 2BZ

1. Road Developments

On Monday of last week, at a Midlands Connect meeting in Birmingham, I heard of various plans for coordinated improvements to the transport infrastructure for the Midlands Region. Chris Grayling the transport minister, who effectively decides on the allocation of funds to our road and rail systems, was scheduled to speak but did not appear, due to the political situation.

Highways England should be removing the throttle at Junction 4A in the autumn, which should relieve the congestion at that point and the dispersal of through traffic to local roads in the vicinity. They are also planning on improving the A46 trunk road, which will relieve some of the pressure on the Birmingham motorway box.

During the smart motorway road works, Bromsgrove has suffered from displaced traffic on to the A38. At Cabinet last Thursday, I presented an interim report on the planned developments along that section of the A38 through Bromsgrove. This is partially funded from various nationally determined sources, and is intended to relieve the long term congestion through the town.

We have rejected the idea, popular with some local District Councillors, to plan for a western distributor route, running through the housing developments between the town and the M5, partly on cost grounds and also as it might be used as an alternative to the M5 at busy times.

Some of you will have noticed that the works to raise New Road passed the cricket ground in Worcester are now complete. We all appreciate that funds are tight and there may need to be reduction in services like school crossing patrols. I would like to make clear that these two projects have different sources of funding, the New Road work being paid for by central government through the Environment Agency. As such it is not using money that could be used for school crossing patrols and other such services that we may need to review

2. Rail Developments

One of the important matters we have taken to Midlands Connect is the Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy, which seeks to improve rail services in the county. The priorities are the dualling of the Cotswold Line to London, so that we can carry two trains per hour on that line. One of those should take no more than two hours, bringing London a lot closer for business people.

A second important development is the Worcestershire Parkway station now under construction at Norton. On Tuesday of last week, we held a press conference there, to highlight the rapid progress the station is making. Trains should be stopping there within 12 months.

The station will not only allow passengers wanting to go to London to bypass the city and park next to the station, but also there will be trains stopping on the cross country line between Birmingham and Bristol. This will mean that people wishing to travel by train to the north east and the south west will not have to leave the county to catch the right train.

On a more parochial level, work on a new station at Kidderminster will start later this year. This station is already the second busiest in the county, and the new buildings will reflect its importance for travel to Birmingham and London.

3. The Financial Position

We cannot disguise the fact that the county's finances are very tight and we will be under pressure to make savings for some years. This is never a popular matter with residents but I hope we all appreciate that we need to balance the books.

Our finances are not helped by the increasing demands for Children's Services and Adult Social Care. These are areas where we have statutory obligations and the demand for our services is increasing. At Cabinet last Thursday we brought forward plans for a wholly owned company to run our children's services, which are improving swiftly, but still under an Ofsted judgement of being inadequate.

Given that some 70% of our income is devoted to meeting these two needs affecting only 12,000 people, you can appreciate why we may be short of money for crossing patrols, repairing potholes and the like. We certainly do not want to be cutting road side verges unnecessarily – and cutting down valuable wild flowers before they have had a chance to seed.

4. Economic developments

Meanwhile, we are keen to support local industry and get more new companies started or relocated to this county. Worcester 6, the business park next to Junction 6 of the M5, has seen new tenants being established, with Kimal, the medical supplies company building their large depot there just now. There will be announcements about other new tenants in the near future.

We need to produce as much sand, gravel and crushed rock locally as possible. At Cabinet last Thursday, I presented the results of work to improve the number of appropriate sites for aggregate extraction in the county. In addition we will be bringing forward the latest waste strategy to ensure maximum recycling of waste where possible and incineration of other materials at the plant at Hartlebury. There is scope for increasing the throughput at that plant, which should bring in extra income for the county.

You will know of the developments in 5G in Worcestershire. While we are acutely aware that not all residents get a good service at present, there was a celebration last Friday at Upton Warren of the superfast broadband that has been installed in an area that has been unable to get good speeds for some time. Our new Home Secretary, the MP for Bromsgrove, Sajid Javid, has been active in this, but was not able to be present.

Meanwhile, we are all concerned about the future security of energy supplies, and I have been to a couple of local conferences recently examining the alternatives available, several of which are local developments of new ideas in this area. Western Power Developments held a workshop last Friday, and the Worcestershire Energy Strategy held another meeting today on how we can improve our situation locally.

5. Local issues

While this report has concentrated on county wide issues, I am aware of the local problems and needs in Abberley. We have tried to find ways of improving the speeding situation on the B4202 and the 443 without great impact. I will be pleased to hear of any other problems that need attention.

A week ago today, I was able to spend some time at Tenbury High Ormiston Academy discussing the importance of local politics with some of the pupils. I hope I was able to convince them of the importance of the sort of dedication shown by people like yourselves at local level, as well as those who serve at District and County level, not to mention our Members of Parliament. There is a tendency to believe that anyone who gets involved in this sort of activity is only interested in furthering their own careers and status. I am sure you will agree with me that this is far from the truth in most, if not all, cases.

070 Aide Memoire notes from Adjournment for Public Question Time.

Complaints continue to be made regarding the non-occupying land owner's maintenance record for the land abutting The Orchards. The unmaintained hedge continues to present the occupants of Churchfields Terrace with diminished light into their properties and for pedestrians it presents a severe obstruction for the entire length of the Terrace. The Parish Council continues to requested the intervention of WCC.

Parish Paths were reported by parishioners as having damaged signposts and in places poorly maintained. The Parish Path Warden (Cllr Jim Gibson) advised that WCC Countryside team had the matter of the signposts already in hand as part of their Summer programme of maintenance. Walkers were asked to identify to the Parish Path Warden the sites that needed maintenance.

Abberley Village Hall Management Committee (AVHMC), represented by Chairperson Sue Coley, explained their reasons for approaching the Parish Council in their letter of 20th March 2018 regarding the long term future of the AVHMC should the current members been unable to recruit new volunteers to take on roles within the AVHMC.