

*Abbots Bromley Parish Council*



**Annual Report**



**April 2011**  
Version 1

This report has been compiled by Abbots Bromley Parish Council using input from a number of different sources. Any views expressed are those of the original authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the Parish Council

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## Introduction

### ***The annual report***

The purpose of this annual report is to make freely available information about the work of the parish council and other community organisations. The council hopes that you will find the information useful and understandable.

This report aims to bring together in one place key details about the activities of the parish council in a manner recommended as good practice by the government for Quality Councils.

### ***Summary to all homes***

A summary of this annual report from the parish council is to be included in the July 2011 ***Bromley Bulletin*** distributed to all households in the parish.

### ***Also available on-line***

An electronic copy of this report is available on the village website where you can view it or print your own copy – [www.abbotsbromley.com](http://www.abbotsbromley.com).

## Council Members and Officer – 2010/11

### ***Council Members***

Roger Jarman            840678            Chairman  
New Cottage, Goose Lane, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DE

Ray Bell                841090            Vice Chairman  
20 St Nicholas Way, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3EB

Debbie Burrows        840058  
61 Seedcroft Lane, Abbots Bromley WS15 3DS

Philip Charles         840251  
Birchwood Rise, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3EA

Alan Elkington 841011  
Fairview, Ashbrook Lane, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DW

Linda Fox 840315  
Coleshill Lodge, Lichfield Road, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DN

Karen Johns 840381  
59 Seedcroft Lane, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DS

Roger Mills 840703  
The Crofts, Market Place, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3BP

Caroline Veitch 840361  
14 Alfred Lyons Close, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3EY

**Officer:-**

Mrs Sarah Meads 01283 840891  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
Marsh Farm, Uttoxeter Road, Abbots Bromley, Staffs, WS15 3EJ  
Email: [parish.council@abbotsbromley.com](mailto:parish.council@abbotsbromley.com)

## WORKING GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES

### **Working Groups**

The chairman and vice chairman are entitled to serve ex officio, on all groups

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Member(s)</b>
Competitions	Cllr Mills
Finance	Cllrs Elkington, Mrs Fox and Mrs Burrows
Newsletter	Cllr Jarman (Editor) Cllr Mrs Johns (Editor) Cllr Elkington (Distribution)
Planning	All Councillors
Recreation	Cllrs Charles, Elkington, Mrs Veitch
Traffic & Parking	Cllrs Charles, Elkington, Mrs Fox , Mrs Johns, Mills
Village Property	Cllrs Charles, Mrs Johns and Mills
2010/2011 Youth Project	Cllrs Jarman, Veitch, Johns, Clerk and Mr Ryan

### **Representatives**

Almhouses	Chairman – ex officio
Crime & Social Issues	Cllrs Charles and Mrs Johns
Fairtrade	Cllr Charles
Finance Officer	Cllr Mrs Burrows
Richard Clarke First School	Cllr Mrs Burrows
RISES	Cllr Mrs Fox
School Governor	None
United Charities	Cllrs Charles and Elkington
Village Hall	Cllr Mrs Johns

# Reports to the Annual Parish Assembly

## Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 7.00 pm

### In the Village Hall, Abbots Bromley

**Introduction:** Again this year for the Parish Assembly the various verbal reports are replaced with written statements. This document contains the reports submitted in advance of the assembly, and question on the contents may be asked during the open forum. Additional reports will be added after the meeting.

**Contents:**

Parish Council Report	Cllr Roger Jarman
Parish Council Finance	Sarah Meads
Village Hall Report	Simon Wilson
Community First Responders	Colin Palmer
Community Transport	David Thompson
Richard Clarke First School	John Hough
Youth Initiative	Cllr Mrs Caroline Veitch, Cllr Mrs Karen Johns, Phil Ryan
Staffordshire County Councillor's Report	Cllr Philip Atkins
East Staffordshire Borough Councillor's Report	Cllr Greg Hall
Parish Council Financial Statement	To be added
Minutes of the Parish Assembly 2010	

**Omissions:** None

**Issue Details:** Version 1 – 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2011

**Changes:** None

## PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

**Planning** – Apart from the Wind Farm (more later) the only planning application to cause major concern this year has been the proposed development of land to the rear of what was Studiocraft. This was for 6 dwellings, as well as the development of the shop itself. We objected on the grounds of inadequate parking and unsafe access. The shop has been approved, but the rest of the development refused. The owner has now appealed against this decision.

**Ivy House, High Street** has had various applications over the year, with 7 houses approved on the land owned by Mr Hammersley, and on the land owned by Walton Homes the conversion of Ivy House itself into 3 terraced dwellings, plus and addition 3 houses to the rear is awaiting a decision. Ivy house is now looking very sad, and the sooner it can be restored the better.

**Village Green.** The refurbishment of properties in the centre of the village has been a major plus for the village, and if the applications for single dwellings on the old R & D sites gets approval, this will remove the remaining eyesores.

**Wind Farm** – Much to the relief of the Council and to the many residents whose lives would have been blighted by the building of this industrial complex, this planning application has now been refused. This was not only the decision of the ESBC Planning Committee, but it followed the

recommendation of the Planning Officers. We now have to wait and see whether there is going to be an appeal.

**Best Kept Village** – We are proud to report that we won the Best Kept Village Award for East Staffordshire District (Large Village Category) in 2010. Yoxall were second, and Tutbury and Barton under Needwood were equal third. A big thank you to Cllr Roger Mills for co-ordinating all the hard work, and to the schools in the village for producing a wonderful array of posters. Let us hope that we can retain it for 2011. The one problem we cannot get to grips with is dog fouling. If anybody has a suggestion of how we can get through to the selfish minority, please let us know.

**Bromley Bulletin** – This year we published in August, December, and March.

**Christmas Tree** – A repeat of what we said last, our thanks to the Brandrick family for donating an excellent tree. Our own tree on the Green is getting bigger, and it may only be couple of years before it will stand proud as our solo tree.

**Parish Council Surgeries**. As last year, these bi-monthly surgeries have continued, although on occasions the Councillor attending has had a very lonely morning.

**Membership of the Council** It is with regret that that we have to report that Cllrs Linda Fox, Caroline Veitch, and Alan Elkington have all decided not to stand for the next Council. Their valuable contributions will be missed. Linda has given sterling service for 16 years, and in recent years has been in charge of the Rises initiative, that has provided funds for many projects in the village. Although Caroline has only served for one term, she will leave a permanent legacy with the work that she has done for the Millennium Green, and the youth of the village. With Alan has for some years been an active contributor to the Best Kept Village competition, and been an integral part of the Bulletin team.

**Rises** – This has now come to an end. Although the collection bins will remain on the Crown Car Park. After one last cheque, we will no longer get any direct financial benefit.

**Traffic and Parking and Neighbourhood Working.** – A working group has been formed under the Neighbourhood Working banner and led by Andy Mason( Senior Neighbourhood Co-ordinator – Rural – ESBC), including parishioners John Haley and Tom Wheeldon, PC Richard Boulter, PCSO Joanne Barrington, and Parish Council representation. A report has been prepared following a walk through the village in November last year, and is attached for information and comment.

**Youth Project.** – This continues, and the five-a-side football pitch has just received Astroturf in front of the goalmouths. The Youth Club has not been a five minute wonder, but is going from strength to strength.

**Village Green Benches.** Last year we reported that a bench, funded by Rises and Richard Clarke School, had been placed on the Green in memory of our much respected and missed School Crossing Patrolman, Mr. Hareford. Three more benches in the same style are now being installed to replace the old ones already in place. One in memory of Brian Newey, a second funded once again by Rises, and the third funded jointly by the Womens' Institute and our prize from the Best kept Village. A fourth bench, again funded by Rises, will be placed in the Nuttery play area.

**Cllr Roger Jarman  
Parish Council Chairman**

## **PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES**

The parish council has its own Financial Regulations, which set down the rules by which the finances of the council are managed. The council employs an independent internal auditor who reviews the financial records. At the end of the year an audit return is completed and submitted to the Audit Commission for the purposes of external audit.

The council's financial regulations can be viewed on the website or via arrangements with the clerk.

The unapproved financial statements for the council for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2011 will be tabled at the Parish Assembly and the final accounts for the year added after the parish council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2011.

**Sarah Meads  
Parish Clerk**

## **ABBOTS BROMLEY VILLAGE HALL**

The past 12 months has seen much activity for the village hall, particularly outside. The reseeded grass area behind the tennis court has proved very popular, so much so that it has been partly re-laid with artificial turf thanks to money from ESBC and the parish council. Whilst this area is used predominately for football anyone is welcome to use it for other activities.

The doors and window frames have received a fresh external coat of paint and the timber cladding to the front of the building has been treated with preservative.

We have recently replaced the nets on the basket ball court and would ask that people do not park there unless all the other spaces are full thus allowing people to play basket ball particularly in the evening.

Moving inside no major work has been carried out this year. Dance classes on Saturday remain our largest regular rent contributor followed by youth club, who have installed a projector and screen that is available to people hiring the Marcia Rice room.

For the past few months we have also temporarily accommodated the Scouts and Guides whilst the hut was refurbished and Tom Thumb playgroup while they are in the middle of moving premises. These temporary bookings have helped maintain income levels that would otherwise have dropped due to less casual bookings such as the players.

Overall the hall continues to "tick along" with much thanks to Shannon our secretary and Sue our treasurer. Hopefully this year by inviting more people to join the committee we can invigorate the village to make more use of an under valued major asset.

**Simon Wilson  
Chairman of the Management Committee**

## **Bromley Community First Responders – 2010/2011**

The group continues to operate successfully with availability of our service remaining at around 95%.

During the year we answered 337 emergency calls on request of West Midlands Ambulance Service. Since the group was formed we have responded to approximately 2250 999 calls.

Responder numbers remain static, we have lost 3 CFRs and gained 3 during the past year.

We are grateful for the support we receive from villagers and village organisations, without whom our charity would not be able to continue.

I would like to thank the CFRs who have given their time and energy to our service over the past year.

**Colin Palmer**  
**Co-ordinator**

## **Abbots Bromley Community Transport**

Last year the community transport clocked up a mileage of 3,688 miles. We have now gone down to 4 drivers.

Last year the Staffordshire County Council gave us a Grant of £489.00 but we are not having an increase this next year so it will be the same as last year. Out of that we had to pay £197.18 insurance, and we had to pay the drivers for what they earned which was £364.10.

The Scheme is working well. The most used places were Queens Hospital Burton-on-Trent, Lichfield Station, Rugeley, Doctors Surgery, Uttoxeter Station, and Balance Street Health Centre.

We don't have a lot of work but what we have got keeps us going. A lot of people have told me that if we did not have the scheme they would not be able get to their appointments and to see friends as the buses don't run at the times they want to go and the elderly find it hard to get on a bus anyway. We also have a Wheel chair Access vehicle

**David P Thompson**  
**Co-ordinator, Abbots Bromley Community Transport**

## **Richard Clarke First School Report**

Here is a brief summary of some key elements of the past 12 months.

**Financial:** The budget for 2011/2012 has yet to be submitted but it is not expected to present more significant difficulties than usual. However, following the radical cuts in Local Authority funding, we do expect a challenging situation in the future.

The proposed changes to the funding structure will place a far greater burden on the school management and governors, together with much more responsibility.

- Responsibility for certain categories of spend has been devolved from LA to schools. This represents about 10% of the LA schools budget. Schools will now have to negotiate 'service-level agreements' with service providers (which could be the LA) to acquire any services required.
- There is to be no increase in the amount of the dedicated schools grant per pupil for 2011-12.
- The allocation for spending on capital projects (including maintenance) has been cut by 80%
- Although school costs are expected to rise by approximately 4.0% in the coming year, the protective funding formula only guarantees that any fall in grant will be limited to -1.5%. This is the first time that the guarantee has been negative.
- As in previous years, the fall in pupil numbers across Staffordshire could bring additional pressures to individual school budgets.

- Opportunities for more collaboration between schools in the Uttoxeter pyramid must be examined to identify resources which could be shared and activities which could be undertaken jointly. This obviously has management and governance implications.

In summary, if a school has falling rolls; or has set a budget which has to use balances; or offers extended school activities; or is planning to repay a loan from its future capital allocation (i.e. reduced by 80%) it has a significant financial problem. At RCFS, we only have to be concerned about the first of these.

RCFS spending is well-controlled where we have the freedom to do so. Teaching staff form our highest cost, followed by support staff. We consider the use of TAs for cover to be best value for the school and will pursue this policy as far as possible in 2011/2012. Energy costs are being closely monitored and we have had 'smart meters' fitted for both gas and electricity. We are also starting negotiations for the various service level agreements which were out of our control in the past.

Yet again, the fundraising of our excellent PTFA, for which we are very grateful, has had a major impact on the purchase of luxury learning resources, enhancing both the curriculum and the learning environment.

**Number of Pupils:** The number of pupils on our roll varies widely from year to year, and this directly determines our funding. In 1998 our number on roll was 145; by 2001/2002 it had fallen to 107. We expect to finish this year with 111 pupils on the roll; we have 26 leaving at the end of this academic year and, currently only 12 signed up to join us next year. Such fluctuations in numbers in a small school like RCFS can cause some financial distress.

We are some way off from considering the combination of year groups in order to preserve realistic class sizes. This is always a last resort but one which always causes major parental protests. We can cope with some intake variation in our financial planning and one small cohort in the school is not a problem. However, we would not be able to manage if we had a sequence of lean years.

We still take nearly 25% of our children from outside our catchment area and this enables us to support our ideal of one year group per class. However, this is a significant reduction on the 40% of a few years ago. We try to publicise the excellence of RCFS via our web-site and by open days and targeted notices around our area. However, we would also hope that the local community would seize every opportunity to inform their friends and family, in other villages of course, what a great First School there is in Abbots Bromley.

**Staffing:** We have a problem caused by a long-term absence through sickness. Fortunately we have been able to secure stable, first class cover by using a supply teacher who knows the school well and is very well regarded by staff and pupils. We have excellent classroom support from teaching assistants including our apprentice, Jasmine Harley, who was selected by the LA to be a 'face' on the LA website. We also have a good set of classroom volunteers, several of whom are in the process of acquiring teaching qualifications.

**Premises:** Fortunately, in the light of the 80% cuts in capital allocation, we managed to secure major investments in premises in the last few years. We have had new central heating boilers (funded by the local authority) and a complete refurbishment of the Early Years classroom. We are also about to embark on a full replacement of fire and evacuation alarms whilst the funding is still available. The perennial problem associated with leaky flat roofs will also have to be addressed.

The re-location of Tom Thumb Nursery to the school grounds is proceeding steadily and the building is now erected on its new site where it sits surprisingly well. Delays have occurred due to possible badger occupation and connection and commissioning of services, but it is expected that



it will be open for business in the near future. An Open Day for Tom Thumb and Richard Clarke School is planned for May.

In the Spring, a major redesign and refurbishment of the Quiet Garden is planned by Mrs Sara Brown and this has been approved (with amendments) by the School Council. Details of this exciting project are on display in the school. Funding will be from the Endowment Fund or PTFA activities, supplemented, we hope, by contributions from local businesses (and individuals).

**School Performance:** We were notified by OFSTED that, since we are a good school with clear capabilities to improve, we will not be inspected until September 2011 at the earliest. This well-earned breathing space has eased tension and given us time to intensify our improvement strategies. We have also been assessed by our school inspector (SIP) as 'good' in all categories. These are safeguarding; quality of self-evaluation; and quality of provision. Also, Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) standards are significantly above national standards in reading, writing and in all subjects together.

The main priorities of our School Development Plan are –

- Continued progress and improved standards in writing across the school with the aim to beat national scores
- Assessment for learning:- self- and peer-assessment using learning logs
- Opportunities for family learning through in-house provision and Creative Partnership (see later)
- Launch of the SLN2 Staffordshire Learning Platform to parents and children

Although the Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) is being scrapped, with no replacement currently proposed, we are continuing to use our existing SEF and are examining our assessments to see where we have been over-modest in not awarding ourselves an 'outstanding' rating. This represents a two-edged sword of course, because OFSTED will challenge our self-assessments as a basis of their evaluation.

**School Self-Review: Parents' Questionnaire:** We conducted our annual survey of parents' views in March 2011 and received an excellent response.

Do you agree with the following statements?	% Agree
My child enjoys school	100.0%
The school keeps my child safe	100.0%
The school informs me about my child's progress	90.5%
My child is making enough progress at this school	92.9%
The teaching is good at this school	100.0%
The school helps me to support my child's learning	95.2%
The school helps my child to have healthy lifestyle	95.2%
The school makes sure that my child is well-prepared for the future	95.2%
The school meets my child's particular needs	97.6%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	100.0%
The school takes account of my suggestions & concerns and has an open door policy	97.6%
The school led and managed effectively	100.0%
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	97.6%

**Note:** We had 39 responses, so each individual response represents 2.4%

We would have preferred to have 100% agreement for every statement but this is not realistic in such a small school. However, every observation made by parents is followed up and a clear action is taken to address it which is added to the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Parents were also asked to tell us what they considered to be the greatest strength of RCFS and what single thing they would like to see improved.

The dominant 'positive' comments all focused on one or more of the following

- Safe environment with a friendly atmosphere
- Excellent, enthusiastic staff, both teaching and support
- Well-led school
- Excellent learning environment
- Good range of after-school activities
- Open-door policy and responsive to concerns

The main 'room for improvement' comments related to improving communications with parents of new Early Years pupils and requests that the school adopted a stronger line with (parents of) persistent latecomers.

We also conducted a survey amongst the children, who, with only a few exceptions, think that school is great, lessons are fun and the teachers are kind and helpful.

The teaching and support staff were also questioned and it was pleasing to note the wholly positive set of responses. Everyone believes that their contributions to an effective team are highly valued; that their career development is being properly managed; and they entirely supported the values and ethos of the school.

**Other matters:** The Funding from the Royal Society enabled us to develop our relationship with Ruth and Ian Froggatt, and the Forestry Commission and this, in turn enabled us to provide environmental projects for all year groups, centred on the Goat Lodge Nature Reserve.

Yet again, for the sixth year running, pupils from Richard Clarke First School have won SAFTAs, in the Early Years and Y3/Y4 categories, awarded by Staffordshire County Council, for digital movie-making.

We were successful in gaining a Creative Partnership grant which enables us to fund an external 'artist' to work with the school on a whole-school project. We had 25 applicants, from whom we selected Kate Slater, a local writer and illustrator, to be our creative partner. Work has already started on the project which is causing much excitement at school (and amongst parents). We hope that it will lead to the publication of the real, pupil-inspired history of the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. Watch this space.

**Summary:** RCFS continues to provide a safe, high-quality learning experience for all of its pupils despite the continuous demands presented by a barely adequate budget. This situation will clearly become more challenging over the next few years. We may also have to face an OFSTED inspection before next year's report but we are confident that we can prevail against the forces of darkness.

The Tom Thumb Nursery will be operating on our site and the issues will shift from physical problems (e.g. site access, shared utilities) to the management problems of making sure that both entities co-exist and operate in perfect harmony to the benefit of both sets of pupils.

Across Staffordshire, indeed across the Country, schools are facing severe funding and governance difficulties. We take reassurance from the fact that Richard Clarke has proved itself to be an excellent, well-run and resilient school and should not be one of the casualties of the drastic re-shaping of education provision which is currently being enacted.

**John Hough**  
**Chair of Governors, Richard Clarke First School**

## **Youth Initiative**

The Youth Project which included establishing a youth club, revamping the Millennium Green play area and building a 5-a-side football pitch at the back of the Village Hall, finalized last year. What's happened since then?

The youth club goes from strength to strength with between 30 and 40 children attending each week. The club has been actively seeking funding to ensure that it can not only provide excellent facilities and activities but also so that it is self-funding wherever possible. The club would like to thank the Borough Council and specifically Councillor Greg Hall for the continued financial support. The club relies on a group of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers and I think it says a lot that the same group of volunteers who started with the club in 2009 are still in place and having just as much fun. However, the club is always looking for more volunteers and if anyone is interested in helping out for a couple of hours a month then we would be delighted to hear from you (contact details below).

The Millennium Green play area has also been a huge success and is extremely well used. We have concentrated on tidying the area over the last year with work done on the paths and cutting back the bushes and trees which were overhanging. The park now looks great and hopefully will be enjoyed for many years to come.

The 5-a-side football pitch was completed at the end of April 2010. It has been so well used that we have decided to replace the turf in front of the goal areas with artificial turf which will be harder wearing. Work is also underway to make the dugout more secure and to provide more seating. The Youth Committee secured over 50% of the funding for this work and would like to thank the Parish Council who provided the remaining monies and continue to give us their full support.

The Committee will continue to seek funding opportunities so that we can make further improvements to these facilities.

**Youth Committee: K Johns, P Ryan, C Veitch**

## **STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR UTTOXETER RURAL DIVISION - REPORT**

There have been many significant changes at Staffordshire County Council over the past year which has placed us better than many other authorities.

This is my first Report since the General Election last year and the formation of the Coalition Government.

The past year has continued to be a difficult one with the current economic climate. The new Government's prime focus is reducing the National Debt after inheriting the dire economic circumstances left from the worst recession for 30 years. Actions the county council have taken to counter these effects have focused on helping families and our local economy while contributing Staffordshire's fair share to reducing the national debt. These include:

- **Transport** – we are extending the concessionary free bus travel package to 24/7 for older people and the disabled. In April, we are introducing discounted travel. For just £1 per journey young people can travel around the county
- **Libraries** –we are innovating by transforming all of our 43 libraries into community resource centres [which will encourage more people to use our libraries](#).
- **‘Telecare’**— [this is](#) a new service to more than 1,000 residents saving the NHS an estimated £3,000 per user, as well as reducing the demand on our adult social care services.
- **Children’s services**—our Families First project will transform services to ensure an integrated approach and will make substantial savings while protecting front line services..
- **Volunteering** —we have built a genuine and comprehensive partnership with the voluntary sector to position volunteering as an essential part of a successful community, which even nationally, is still rare.
- **Winter highway maintenance** —we routinely salt over 43 [per cent](#) of the [county road](#) network compared to 35 [per cent](#) nationally.
- **Staffordshire highways network** —an extra £6 million will be invested this year into repairing the damage caused by the winter’s freezing conditions. This is in addition to the extra £30 [million](#) committed to road reconstruction.
- **Road safety** —we are one of the first councils in the country to introduce permanent part time 20mph zones at schools on busy A and B roads, using a special exemption from Government to protect children at peak school times.
- **Staffordshire Business Support Fund**—a £2m loans fund for small businesses has helped 35 small businesses, employ 250 [more](#) people across the county.
- **Community Wellbeing Fund**—Adult [social care](#) is the service area where we make our major contribution around £18[million](#) per year. We have increased overall funding, targeting in particular smaller community support groups through our innovative Community Wellbeing Fund.
- **County farms**—we are not disposing of our farm estates to maximise short term receipts. Our estates business generates over £1 [million](#) a year of profit to support the council’s services.
- **Announcing in November we would freeze Council Tax.** Staffordshire County Council has the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest council tax in the country and performs in the top quartile.
- **Staffordshire Ring and Respond** for Respite Care
- **Celebrating Volunteering** in Staffordshire by recognising those who go the extra mile. JCB won the corporate award for their NSPCC work.
- **Freezing the rents** of over 200 business who are tenants of the county council’s enterprise centres
- **Shop Local campaign** in Uttoxeter, Newcastle, Cannock and Tamworth
- **Expanding SCC’s apprenticeship scheme** to help over 250 young people into work and support other organisations who wish to take on apprentices.
- We have developed **Extra Care facilities** in partnership with our Housing Associations which will enable people to live independently with proper support in Burton, Leek, Stafford, and many other places are planned.
- Veolia is to operate the new **Waste to Energy Plant** at Four Ashes. This project is the largest ever undertaken by the council at £850m+ and will save its cost many times over its 25 year lifetime from avoiding paying Landfill Tax and from energy generation.

In July last year the government published, a number of Structural Reform Plans to hand power to the public with clear priorities and milestones. These are the key tool of the Coalition Government for ensuring that departments are accountable for the implementation of the reforms set out in the Coalition Agreement. They replace the old, top-down systems of targets and central micromanagement.

There are 4 Bills/White Papers going through Parliament, Public Health White Paper, Health and Social Care Bill, Localism Bill, Police Reform Bill, which set these changes out. These have confirmed we were right as the new administration to put in place the structural reforms and

operations within the county council to face the challenges of community focus while putting our economy as our number 1 priority.

In the past 12 months the county council has continued to work with all the Public sector bodies in Staffordshire, bringing them together to concentrate on delivering visible outcomes for our residents, while at the same time reducing the cost. This has meant working together in an open and honest way. You may have thought that already happened, I am afraid it did not always. This has resulted in 2 top shared priorities; having a thriving economy and stopping the abuse of alcohol, both of which cut across all levels of our society.

We have also formed a Staffordshire and Stoke Local Enterprise Partnership, led by the private sector to bolster our local economy and help align skills, planning and transport required with business need. It is vital we grow existing business, attract new ones and encourage business start ups. A healthy economy in turn lowers crime, keeps good health and ensures our well being.

The abuse of alcohol is behind many crimes, domestic fires, domestic violence, poor health and a range of other issues. By working to prevent this happening frees scarce resources to target on other areas or lower taxes.

The public sector is also focusing on 4 specific areas where there are many social issues. These are in Blake - Cannock, Glasgote - Tamworth, Anglesey - Burton and Highfields - Stafford. By working together we can put an end to the ever revolving door of deprivation and bring usefulness to people's lives.

While Building Schools for the Future has ended we have continued to transform education opportunities in Tamworth with a collegiate Academy which has been expanded to include Rugeley. An Academy is on the cards for Blake Valley in Cannock.

On a personal level I remain Leader of the County Council and am on a number of other bodies including the Police Authority. I am Chairman of the Staffordshire Strategic Partnership, West Midlands Councils and Staffordshire Local Government Pensions Panel. I am also on the Local Government Association national Executive.

Many powers are delegated to Cabinet Portfolio holders and frontline councillors, your Local Member.

The county council has set a target of saving £120m over 3 years while concentrating on maintaining frontline services. We appointed a new Chief Executive, Nick Bell, in the spring, which has brought a fresh way of working to the Council, moving towards a commissioning service model. This One Council approach is underpinned by 5 core values of customer focus, personal responsibility while remembering the vulnerable that need our care. They also call for boldness and leadership with innovation and efficiency, which in turn deliver the 9 key strategic priorities of the county council.

There are 2 new departments of People and Place now. This brings Children and Adult Services together in People and their physical sectors with the Development Services departments to form Place. We have also seen the Health sector work ever closer with the county council in adult care and Public Health.



These are major changes and we have done much work to see they happen with seamlessly. They have delivered savings of 15% in the Senior Leadership Team and will deliver £90m over 3 years across the council. This means we can concentrate resources on service delivery and outcomes while keeping council tax low.

Locally last years **Staffordshire Local Community Fund** went to:

Rocester Junior Football	Funding towards a football kit for one of the teams	517.95
The Art Fund	Funding towards keeping the Staffordshire Hoard	1000.00
Uttoxeter Mind	To support the extensive young peoples' counselling service working with schools to raise mental awareness and inform about services available	1000.00
Talbot First School	Funding towards gold/silver medals for the chess team competition	60.00
Kingstone Local News	Funding towards consumables for the continued printing of the Kingstone Newsletter for the community advising of all local issues, events and general news	600.00
Wootton Cricket Club	Funding towards gateway, safety rails and part of the new boundary fencing	1000.00
Kingstone Parish Council	Funding towards purchase and installation of a Horse Springer for the village play area	500.00
Mayfield Pre-school	Funding towards the purchase and installation of a Horse Springer for the village play area	500.00

Katharine House Hospice	Funding towards the renovation of an existing bathroom into a purpose-built Wet Room for the In-Patient Unit	450.00
Mayfield Youth Club	Funding towards room hire and rock and roll themed event for the youth community	100.00
J&SA Lander T/A Bramshall Newsheet	Funding towards printing of the Bramshall News Sheet which is delivered free to households within the village	500.00
Mayfield & Ellastone Community First Responders	Funding towards ROSPA and Blue Light driving course for four active qualified responders	1000.00
Uttoxeter Farmers Market	Funding towards six banners and 5000 leaflets to attract new customers and help secure the future of the market	500.00
Dove Valley ASC	Funding towards JVC underwater video kit, laptop & multi-function printer used for all swimmers to further improve stroke & technique	900.00
Rocester Parish Council	Funding towards a permanent interpretation board identifying the areas of historical significance within Rocester	665.69
Mayfield Youth Club	Funding towards a range of activities for the youth club including Djing, Graffiti, Dance, Sport & Music	1,000.00

If anyone wants to apply for funding from this year's £10,000 for local schemes, the forms are available from the County Website.

After meeting Highway officials Loxley crossroads, with its accident history, has had Vehicle Activated Signs as well as extra warning signs.  
Traffic calming was installed in Rocester and modified adjacent to the JCB Academy and the waiting times outside the village shops has been extended to 1 hour.  
This year the 20 mph speed signs and a Zebra crossing is coming to Mayfield outside the Henry Prince school at Mayfield.

I will be looking at traffic calming on the approach to Stramshall after the completion of the footway from Stramshall to Uttoxeter last year.

I have also been involved with the Stubwood Tanker Inquiry.

This is only a snap shot of the many things that I come across in a year and if anyone wishes to know more on any subject do not hesitate to contact me.

**Cllr Philip Atkins**

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## **EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCILLOR BAGOTS WARD - REPORT**

This is my first annual report since my election on 6th May 2010. There have been significant changes at East Staffs Borough Council in the last year, many of which are a result of the Council's proactive approach to the savings we anticipated we would be asked to make by our new coalition Government. The new Government quickly made it their priority to reduce the massive burden of debt it inherited from the previous Government, (£120 million per day of debt interest alone!) and we fully expected all District and Borough Councils to be asked to play a part in reducing the national debt.

We anticipated a 'worst case scenario' of 28% reduction in our Government grant over the next four years.

Although we would have to wait until December for confirmation of the Government Grant settlement, we took the decision to make the necessary changes within the 2010/2011 financial year, in other words 'jump before being pushed'. In August, the number of executive officers was reduced from 12 to just 7, followed by a measured re-structuring of two departments, reducing bureaucracy. The council took the decision to move out of the 1930's extension of the Town Hall and re-locate to Wetmore Road Maltsters. The Town Hall itself and the Civic Function suite will remain and is earmarked for maintenance using proceeds from the planned sale of the Midland Grain Warehouse. This work is scheduled to take place early in the next administration. These measures, along with many other cost saving exercises, have contributed to total annual savings of £1.67 million for 2011/12.

The latest Annual Audit Letter issued by the Audit Commission in December was one of the best the authority has ever received, saying;

*"You continue to maintain your very good track record of improving value for money. You actively use information on costs and performance to identify areas where value for money needs to be improved."*

The savings made by E S B C have been made without compromising on any front line services while improving the quality of these. The Authority now re-cycles OVER 51% of rubbish collected! The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2011/12 and 2012/13, shows a balanced budget and I am satisfied that the actions we have taken have been in the interests of all.

As a result of the early action, and planning for the 'worst case', E S B C was able to set - 2% council tax for 2011/12, with a planned 0% for 2012/13. Public toilets will remain open. The VAT increase on car parking charges will not be passed on to customers (an estimated cost of £40,000 to the authority).

This year the authority undertook a major refurbishment of the Meadowside Leisure Centre in Burton. This project was delivered on time and under budget. This is now being enjoyed by all and is a proud achievement for the Borough Council.

During the year, the decision was taken to join Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).



## **In Bagots Ward.**

My first task as a your new Borough Councillor was to ensure a continued Post Office facility in Abbots Bromley following the retirement of Harry and Sue on June 19th 2010. Five minutes after my election, I was handed a letter from Post Office Ltd. which suggested there was no need for this facility and directed A B and surrounding residents to Hixon, Yoxall or Rugeley. This was not acceptable to me! After a discussion with the Cash Stores, it transpired that Mark and Gill had expressed an interest in taking on a Post Office Local but were not able to progress their application. I was able to help, although PO Ltd. estimated that it would be November at the earliest before a functioning facility could be opened. By working closely with Post Office Ltd's field change officers and the Cash Stores, we were able to bring this forward to August. This was a major achievement in a climate where rural Post Offices are under threat.

During the year I have been consulted on planning applications throughout the Ward. Two of these I called in to the planning applications committee. One was an application to build 5 houses on the former Studiocraft site in Abbots Bromley, the access to the site, between Dolphin Cottage and Rose cottage was a serious concern. The committee agreed with me, following their site visit, and the application was refused, unanimously. The other 'call in' was the application for eight 110m wind turbines on Bagots Park. This application was refused by the planning applications committee.

## **WASP Funding.**

This year, my Borough Councillor's WASP fund was allocated as follows,

£200 for a 'springy' in Kingstone playground.

£400 to replace the condemned radiator in Admaston Village Hall

£400 to permanently install a projector and screen in Abbots Bromley Village Hall for the youth group

In January 2011, I was able to bid for other borough councillors' unspent WASP funds with the following success,

£200 for a wheelchair for the 'Evergreens'

£1,700 to lay all-weather surface in the goals of the 5-a-side football pitch, Abbots Bromley Parish council

£760 for Abbots Bromley Scout Hut committee to replace floor mats and notice boards damaged by fire

£300 Abbots Bromley 4 Youth, for a football table

£340 for training equipment for junior cricketers

If anyone knows of a local community project which might benefit from WASP funding, then please contact me.

As part of my role as your Borough Councillor, I have served as a member on the Assessment sub committee of the Standards Committee.

In October I was appointed as ESBC's representative at Staffordshire CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England)

In October I was appointed as chairman of the Cleaner, Safer, Healthier and Happier sub-committee of the Scrutiny Program Board, at which I have conducted a review of the authority's Taxi Licensing Policy.

Since January I have been a member of the Planning Applications Committee. In the short time that I have been on planning there have already been some landmark planning applications for the committee to consider, namely Bagots Park, the former JCB site in Uttoxeter, and an application for a Tesco store in Hawkins Lane in Burton.

This report is intended as an overview of the work I have been involved with on behalf of Bagots Ward during 2010/11. If anyone would like to know more then please get in touch with me,

**Cllr Greg Hall**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly  
held on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010  
in the Village Hall, Abbots Bromley,  
pursuant to notice having been given**

Present: Cllr Roger Jarman (Chairman)  
M Allaker, Cllr Ray Bell, A Blower, Cllr Debbie Burrows, Harry Burrows, Susan Burrows, Cllr Philip Charles, Cllr Alan Elkington, Alex Fox, Cllr Linda Fox, Christine Gilchrist, Sheila Godfrey, John Hough, Cllr Karen Johns, Mary Mills, Cllr Roger Mills, G Rosser, Philippa Roy, Eric Roy, Phil Ryan, Rita Ryan, Amanda Shaw, Marilyn Shaw, Cllr Caroline Veitch, Val Webb, Tom Wheeldon, Helen Wilson, Simon Wilson,

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Meads – Parish Clerk

Apologies: Helen Davies

**1. Chairman's Welcome and Report**

Cllr Roger Jarman welcomed everyone to the meeting and his report was taken as being read having already been circulated.

**2. Presentation of the Jubilee Cup**

The Chairman presented a certificate to the previous year's winners of the Jubilee Cup, Harry and Sue Burrows.

The Chairman presented the Jubilee Cup for 2010 to Cllr Mrs Caroline Veitch and Cllr Mrs Karen Johns and Mr Phil Ryan in recognition for all their hard work securing funding and managing the successful refurbishment of the Millennium Green and the football pitch and the launch of the Youth Club.

### 3. **Abbots Bromley United Charities**

The accounts of the United Charities were presented and they were signed by the Chairman of the meeting. Cllr Philip Charles announced that Mrs Jean Needham had been appointed to the trustees after the sudden death of Mr Bernard Grundy.

### 4. **Minutes of the Parish Assembly 2009**

Mr Tom Wheeldon informed the meeting that his comments during the open forum had not been noted and he had not been named as being present at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** *that the minutes be amended to include Mr Wheeldon's comments and that he be included on the meeting register. The minutes of the Parish Assembly held on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2009 could then be signed as a true and correct record.*

### 5. **Parish Council Accounts**

A draft summary of the un-audited accounts for the parish council to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010 were tabled.

### 6. **Open Forum**

The Chairman invited questions from the meeting on any topics relevant to residents within Abbots Bromley:-

- **Report from East Staffordshire Borough Council – Alex Fox.** As Cllr Greg Hall had only just taken up office as Borough Councillor, Mr Alex Fox, gave a report of ESBC activity over the past 12 months.

He reported that ESBC were making cost saving on average of 4% per year and there was a balanced report for the next year.

The introduction of the blue bins had been highly successful with recycling increasing by 50%.

The planning department had been reduced by almost half.

The borough council had received an award for their work with youth and work was on-going to tackle alcohol abuse.

Mr Fox highlighted that he was still concerned about development around Blithfield reservoir and he believed that the wind farm at Bagots Park had not yet gone away.

He also reported that an additional 12,900 houses needed to be found in the borough. Districts will be rewarded for the number of houses they build. He emphasised that areas need to be careful that they do not get over developed.

Mr Fox encouraged the Parish Council and the community to join in the neighbourhood forum.

Finally, Mr Fox thanked the community for all their support and said how much he had enjoyed being a the member for Bagots Ward.

- **Agricultural Vehicles – Tom Wheeldon** – highlighted that agricultural vehicles were not being driven responsibly. The Chairman responded that an article regarding this issue had featured in the Bulletin and was also brought up at the

neighbourhood working committee. A meeting was to be arranged with Young Farmers.

- **Planning – Tom Wheeldon** – the issue was raised regarding the problems that had been encountered with the planning department and the Portfields development. Alex Fox reported that Portfields did not actually break any rules as it was outside the conservation area. Cllr Roger Jarman outlined what planning permission had been granted.
- **Parking – Tom Wheeldon** – raised the issue of parking, particularly around the Goose Lane area. He also highlighted that school children waiting for the bus by Goose Lane play ‘dare’ games and are in ‘high spirits’ in the morning. He asked if something could be done to educate the children before there was an accident. Cllr Greg Hall asked if the Parish Council could write to the head teacher at Oldfields school to inform him of the situation.

With no other business the meeting closed at 8.05pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_