



ABBOTS BROMLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021/22

Abbots Bromley Parish Council will do all it can to protect Abbots Bromley's heritage and village status and seek to enhance the well-being of the community by moving towards a greener and more sustainable environment.



Source: High Level Photography Ltd

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May 2022

Abbots Bromley Parish Council

Annual Report 2021/22

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Abbots Bromley Parish Council

Annual Report 2021/22

1. Introduction

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. An electronic copy of this report will be available to download from www.abbotsbromley.com/council

2. Council Members and Officer 2021/22

Abbots Bromley Parish Councillors

The following were elected/co-opted to serve the community until May 2023:

- Mr Keith Baker (kbakerabpc@gmail.com)
- Mr Richard Beaumont (rbeaumontabpc@gmail.com)
- Mrs Catherine Brown (brownabpc@gmail.com)
- Mr Paul Freeman (pfreemanabpc@gmail.com)
- Dr Helen Lockey (helenlockeyabpc@gmail.com)
- Mr Richard Love (rloveabpc@gmail.com)
- Mr Edward Rodway-Bowden (erodwaybowdenabpc@gmail.com) **Vice Chair**
- Sarah Meads (parish.council@abbotsbromley.com) **Clerk**

East Staffordshire Borough Council

Abbots Bromley is part of the Bagots Ward represented on East Staffordshire Borough Council by Greg Hall.



Staffordshire County Council

Abbots Bromley is part of the Uttoxeter Rural electoral division, represented on Staffordshire County Council by Philip Atkins (01889590230; Mobile: 07973 82034; philip.atkins@staffordshire.gov.uk).



Member of Parliament

Abbots Bromley is part of the parliamentary constituency of Lichfield and is currently represented by Michael Fabricant, MP.

3. Working Groups

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

Working Group	Member(s)
Competitions	The Clerk, VACANCY
Finance/Grants	Cllrs K Baker, Cllr R Love
Newsletter	Cllr K Baker The Clerk (Editor) Cllr R Love (Distribution)
Planning	All Councillors
Recreation & Village Property	Cllr R Beaumont Cllr P Freeman Cllr R Love
Traffic & Parking	Cllr K Baker Cllr R Beaumont
Neighbourhood Planning Group	Cllr P Freeman Cllr K Baker Cllr R Love

Representatives

Almshouses	Cllr Mrs C Brown
Finance Officer	Cllr R Love
Schools	Cllr Dr H Lockett
United Charities	Mr Charles
Village Hall	Cllr K Baker
Traffic & Parking	Cllr K Baker Cllr R Beaumont
ABSA	Cllr R Love Cllr R Beaumont

4. Parish Council Report

Best Kept Village

- 4.1. A number of volunteers and the council work hard to remove weeds and clean the village property such as benches on the village green remove litter from the roadside. This vital work keeps the village looking smart but also helps to maintain and improve the environment by removing loose litter that could negatively impact wildlife. The council thanks everyone that volunteers in litter picking and responsibly disposing of litter helping maintain the health, safety and appearance of the area. Thank you also to the children of Richard Clarke School for all the fantastic posters that have been produced this year and can be seen throughout the village.

Recreation

- 4.2. The Nuttery (under 5s) Playground situated up Schoolhouse Lane has this year undergone maintenance to repair areas of damaged wet pour. During this work the existing wet pour was also cleaned as it was identified to have a build-up of moss making it a little slippery. At regular intervals the playground is inspected to ensure all equipment is in good order and that the area is in a clean and safe condition so it can be enjoyed by children safely. The seat base on the duck was replaced as some cracking and damage was noted during an inspection. Some repair work was also undertaken to the rocking caterpillar due to a small area of damage to the wood.
- 4.3. At Millennium Green (playground by the village hall) substantial work has been carried out. The old steps have been refinished with new foot bases and anti-slip strips to improve safety and usability. The bird nest swig has been replaced with a brand-new bird nest swing as some deterioration of the old swings wooden frame was noted. Last year several tons of new bark chippings were installed and raked flat improving safety and appearance of the area. Thank you to the volunteers who spent the day working on this. The climbing frame has had some new caps installed as some of the original caps had become damaged or missing. Replacing these caps will extend the life of the climbing frame and also improve usability of the equipment.
- 4.4. External inspection of both playgrounds is carried out throughout the year and a full detailed report is sent to the council, this is on top of the inspection carried out by the council to ensure the areas are maintained to the best possible standard and that and concerns raised are in line with Council's own frequent inspections.
- 4.5. The outdoor gym which comprises of six pieces of outdoor use equipment which is situated alongside the tennis courts at the village hall which are a wonderful asset to the whole community especially anyone wanting to keep fit while enjoying fresh air. This equipment is inspected on a regular basis and is in good working order.

Traffic

- 4.6. This subject has raised as many questions as answers. Abbots Bromley was not designed to cope with the volume and speed of today's traffic!
- 4.7. School House Lane, with its surgery, school, nursery and businesses is a cause for concern because it is single-width, has no footway, and has a very high volume of vehicles and pedestrians. The Parish Council did manage to have two "SLOW" signs painted on the road, but with the volume of traffic they are perhaps not sufficiently noticeable. Again, it is difficult to find a solution to the obvious danger to pedestrians and riders. The new Highway Code rules seem to give pedestrians some priority over motorists, but not nearly enough.

Quiet Lanes

- 4.8. "Quiet Lane" designation is used by other authorities to give pedestrians/riders a little protection from motorists by making them aware that the lane is a popular route for non-motorists. The response from our community to a survey a while ago was overwhelmingly supportive. This was not so with Staffordshire County Council when we met them to discuss the possibility. Abbots Bromley has four very popular circular walks to help us maintain our physical and mental wellbeing. While it was a missed opportunity for SCC to offer support, we shall continue to raise the topic.
- 4.9. The subject of Quiet Lane designation for three popular circular routes around the village (Seedcroft Lane, Harley Lane and Radmore Lane) was raised at a meeting with Cllr Philip Atkins. Sadly, he was not supportive. The Parish Council will continue to press for Quiet Lane designation because walking and riding along these popular routes promotes healthier lifestyles - and we would want people to be able to take part in comparative safety.

Parking

- 4.10. Parking too close to junctions has resulted in some near-misses. Some would like to see far more double-yellow lines in the village in a bid to stop this; others feel they are unsightly and can't, in any case, be enforced. The Parish Council has been told by SCC that they would not consider painting the odd double-yellow because of the associated costs, but that they might consider a scheme which involved much wider use of double yellow lines.

Speeding

- 4.11. Speeding motorists (not always breaking the speed limit but driving too fast for the conditions) is a problem that seems to have no solution. Our main street is narrow and many of the houses don't have off-road parking. Some say the resulting parked cars act as a traffic calming measure; others say they encourage drivers to speed up when they see some clear road ahead. The raised pedestrian crossing at the eastern end of the village seems to slow most vehicles. Perhaps there is a need for another crossing towards the village centre? Certainly, many children and adults take their lives into their

hands when crossing the main street to get to the school pick-up point at the Buttercross, or to get to the surgery, school and nursery up School House Lane. Apparently, the cost of a new pedestrian crossing is about £20,000. The Parish Council has looked into the purchase of a moveable “Speed Indicator” sign - similar to ones used in places like Uttoxeter, and is hopeful that one can be provided.

Community Speed Watch Group

- 4.12. Abbots Bromley does have a current running Community Speed Watch Group with a number of specially trained members. Members are trained by Staffordshire Police part in class and part practical. The objective of the group is to monitor the speed of vehicles travelling in and through the village, report speeding vehicles to the Police and monitor driver behaviour the adversely impacts safety such as using a phone while driving. Several sites around the village designated by Staffordshire Police with a further three sites also designated by Staffordshire Police are identified as suitable for the group to carry out this work. The council is also in the process of getting 30MPH stickers to be placed on wheelie bins. Once these have been received the council will be able to distribute these amongst the community. The council has also been in talks with Staffordshire Police about getting the mobile speed camera van to attend the area more often to act as a deterrent to speeding motorists by handing out fines and points on driving licences and in assisting with monitoring driving behaviour. Staffordshire Police have been in the village carrying out this activity and hope that we have more of the same in the coming months.

Potholes

- 4.13. Thank you to residents who report potholes to the Parish Council. The Clerk duly completes Highway’s online form (it will only allow a problem to be reported once) and then it is down to Highways to get the work completed once they have surveyed the problem and ensured it meets their criteria for repair.

Planning

- 4.14. During the year the parish council has been consulted on 73 applications compared to 65 in the previous year. The council can only object to an application in line with planning legislations. Often the council’s local knowledge and feedback to ESBC is not taken on board by planning officers. There also seems to be a rise in retrospective planning applications rather than applicants applying for permission before doing the work.
- 4.15. At the time of going to print the parish council has nothing further to report on Abbots Bromley School. Despite several requests to Woodard no further information has been received on the future of the site.

Almshouses

- 4.16. All eight alms houses remained fully occupied throughout the year. After the return of the two residents to the recently remodelled bungalow units, necessary snagging was carried out throughout the year and the bungalow remodelling project finally signed off at the end of March 2022. All almshouse units are now fully remodelled and equipped appropriately for the foreseeable future.
- 4.17. Minor updates and repairs were carried out throughout the year as necessary to the other alms house units accommodated within the 18th century building. The communal garden to the rear was maintained by the Trust although some residents also have small areas which they tend with care and enthusiasm, and those who have them also maintain colourful window boxes on the street frontage.

Christmas Tree

- 4.18. The council continues to put Christmas lights on the conifer tree on the village green each year. The lights are hung by councillors for everyone in the village and passing through to enjoy. It's also important to note that the lights used are ultra-energy efficient and use a minimal amount of electricity being very kind to the environment while helping to give festive cheer over the Christmas period.

New Initiatives

- 4.19. With over ninety-seven percent of ancient wildflower meadows destroyed since the 1930s, road verges are a vital refuge for many bees, butterflies, birds, bats and bugs – a good verge will supply a diverse source of nectar and pollen. Over seven hundred species of wildflowers grow on our verges, nearly forty-five percent of our total flora. With these facts in mind, SCC Highways has agreed to the Parish Council's request that the verges from the top of School House Lane to the Staffordshire Way turn should be cut just one a year. Last year - the first year of the trial - over twenty-four species of wildflowers were counted. It is hoped that the trial is extended to other sections of lanes. Young people, in particular, have been very supportive.
- 4.20. Wildflower seeds have been purchased and planted in the children's play areas.
- 4.21. A Visitor's Guide featuring historical walks around the village has been published and copies are available at four places in the village. The idea is to attract visitors and thereby help local businesses and St Nicholas' church. Over eight hundred and fifty guides have been taken in the past year. The Parish Council has funded these so far, but in order to support other initiatives, is exploring ways in which the publication can be self-sustaining, e.g., engaging local businesses as advertising partners.

- 4.22. Footpath entrances are having styles replaced by gates in order to allow easier access for those unable to climb over styles.
- 4.23. Planters have been placed at the three main entrances to the village. (Many thanks to Karen Haywood for supplying them, and to anyone who waters the plants. Thanks also to those at Marsh Farm for planting and maintaining the planters on the village green).
- 4.24. The subject of public EV charging points has been investigated. However, after having discussed with installation companies and having obtained quotes, the Parish Council has now been told it can't use funds for this purpose.
- 4.25. Finally, thank you to all those who are encouraging wildlife by creating wildlife areas in gardens and verges.

The Bromley Bulletin

- 4.26. The Bromley Bulletin is hand delivered by different councillors to different areas of the village. In far out areas of the village this is done by post to ensure consistent and timely delivery. This bulletin ensures that members of the community are kept informed regarding activities taking place in the community and councillors work hard to ensure it is full of the most up to date information.

Community Engagement

- 4.27. The Parish Council is currently exploring ways in which to engage more with the community and to facilitate freer and more consistent flow of information. The purpose is to ensure that all are aware of developments within the village and also to nurture a greater community spirit

5. Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.1. A Neighbourhood Plan is an opportunity for a community like ours to have a say on future development in the Parish and set out planning strategies which will help it to remain sustainable into the future.
- 5.2. A group of councillors and non-councillors (the Neighbourhood Plan Group or NPG) was established and spent 2016-2019 seeking the views of the community. The Group then set about the task of writing a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan has attempted to meet the wishes expressed by the community, whilst at the same time complying with the government's National Planning Policy Framework and ESBC's Local Plan. During this work the Group has received support and advice from ESBC's Neighbourhood Plan Development Officer and an independently appointed Neighbourhood Plan consultant, whose work was funded by grant aid.

- 5.3. By the end of the Covid lockdown the NPG had produced a draft plan which, in its opinion, reflected the community's views as closely as possible. This draft was presented to the Parish Council in February 2021, and a small group of councillors was then charged with liaising with ESBC and the Parish Council's consultant to ensure that the final draft met their requirements.
- 5.4. Earlier this year, the draft plan was presented to the community (and over thirty statutory consultees) for the Regulation 14 six-week consultation process. All written responses received have been formally recorded and discussed and the draft will be amended as appropriate. The Parish Council is close to completing this task and is pleased to report that the overwhelming majority of residents and all statutory consultees supported the plan with many making positive suggestions as to how it could be improved.
- 5.5. Once the final draft has been approved by the Parish Council, the next step is to submit the plan and supporting documents to ESBC, who will check that it complies with the legislation and then commence a further six-week consultation. During this time, ESBC will appoint an independent examiner who will check that the plan meets the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans and issue a report.
- 5.6. If the plan passes this scrutiny, ESBC will organise a referendum in the parish at which the community will be invited to vote on whether to accept the plan. A simple majority vote for acceptance will result in the plan being adopted and being used to determine planning applications in the parish alongside the current ESBC Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan will allow development in the parish to evolve in a way determined by its residents and not just the Borough-wide requirements of the Local Plan.
- 5.7. It is currently hoped to formally submit the plan and supporting documents to ESBC in June. The timescale after that is down to ESBC, but the Parish Council believes that a referendum could be held by the autumn and the plan becoming a "made plan" later this year.

6. County Councillor Report

CLLR PHILIP ATKINS MBE

Uttoxeter Rural Division Annual Report May 2022

- 6.1. As well as the pandemic and the Ukrainian war, a lot of changes have happened in the last two years after I stood down as Leader of the County Council. I am a Member of the Local Government Association Councillor Forum and the Cabinet Office's National Growth Board. A busy life as I still farm at Abbey Fields in Rocester, on South Staffordshire College Board and Rocester Parish Council, as well as Health Scrutiny and Pensions.
- 6.2. Across Staffordshire we saw incredible acts of generosity and courage during Covid, in particular the dedication of our incredible NHS staff and social care workforce in caring for the sick and vulnerable in the toughest of times. Then there are the volunteers, communities, neighbours, and businesses, stepping up and doing their bit to keep people safe, fed, and healthy.
- 6.3. Since then, we have seen volunteers step forward to help Ukraine.

Community Fund 2022

- 6.4. Each County Councillor has up to £2,500 to allocate. This can be spent in smaller amounts and there is no set minimum. County Councillors are also able to jointly fund projects which work across their local areas, or even to fund projects working districtwide or countywide.
- 6.5. Bids are initially accepted until 23.59 on 31 October 2021, and funding must be spent by 31 March 2022 unless otherwise agreed with the County Council. The County Council may alter this deadline or amend the terms of the fund following review at any time.
- 6.6. What is this fund for? Funding may be used in respect of the following three things:

a. Community projects about looking after ourselves

For example, projects that:

- support and enhance personal physical health
- support the improvement of wellbeing, resilience and independence

b. Community projects about looking after those around us

For example, projects to:

- connect people in communities to support, or to each other
- give children and young people the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential
- support those who need additional help

c. Community projects about looking after your place

For example, projects that:

- enhance the places where we live
- further develop our community spaces
- bring people together to increase community spirit

- 6.7. The link to the fund application is: [2022 Community Fund - Staffordshire County Council](#)

A50 Growth Corridor Update

- 6.8. Project A as it is known is a major piece of engineering and a huge success and will deliver many economic benefits, while also improving road safety.
- 6.9. We are continuing to lobby for Project B to be in the Road investment strategy Programme as part of the North Midlands Manufacturing Corridor.

Digital Working and Superfast Staffordshire Website

- 6.10. Householders and businesses in East Staffordshire—the first communities already feeling the benefit—can find out exactly which areas will be getting faster internet speeds. You can find when and where the faster fibre broadband will be available at the Superfast Staffordshire website www.superfaststaffordshire.co.uk/
- 6.11. Staffordshire County Council, BT and Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) are working in partnership to deliver superfast broadband services across Staffordshire as part of the national programme managed by BDUK. When added to the commercial roll-out we now have 97% of premises receiving speeds in excess of 24 Mbps.
- 6.12. With more people working from home because of the pandemic, the need for 5G and faster broadband has become even more pressing. It is a good job we have done what we have, but more is needed.

MyStaffs App and the Shift to Digital

- 6.13. You can access all your council services on the move with the ‘My Staffs App’, free and available on Apple devices, Android and Google platforms from the Apple App store and Google Play.
- 6.14. The MyStaffs app is a much quicker and easier way in which customers can talk to us with new technology using smart phones. If you need to report an issue, make a transaction, or request information, with the free app you access key services anytime, anywhere.
- 6.15. You can even specify your location so that you receive information about the services which just apply in your area.

6.16. What's more: the app doesn't just feature key county services but some at district and borough level too, which means you can access everything all in one place, at the touch of a button. Services available through the app include:

- School Term Date Information
- School Closures
- Childcare
- Advice and information for parents of under 5s
- Local Venues and Attractions
- Waste Services
- School Meal Menus and Pricing
- Registration Services
- Council Tax Information
- Roads and Highways

So, if you're always on the go – save time today and download the MyStaffs App for Apple and Android devices

Staffordshire Connects

6.17. Staffordshire Connects is an online directory of local care, support and wellbeing services, activities and events across Staffordshire aimed at the whole family at:

<https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/home.page>

6.18. Staffordshire Connects makes it easier for people to find and access support and wellbeing services from hundreds of organisations, all in one place. With just a few clicks of a button, you can browse, compare, book and buy activities.

A515 and HCVs

6.19. With economic growth comes traffic and the issue of Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs) and there have been extensive discussions to find a solution to issues around HCVs using the A515 as a shortcut from the A50 to the A38.

6.20. Experimental traffic orders have reduced HGV traffic movement along sections of the road after coming into force in last year. It is important to note that this is a community-led scheme and has been implemented in response to community concerns. The scheme is supported by the police who will carry out enforcement of the orders. Much more than this is happening in the Uttoxeter Rural area.

6.21. This is only a snapshot 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.

7. Reports from Village Organisations

The Richard Clarke First School Report

JOHN HOUGH, CHAIR OF GOVERNORS, RICHARD CLARKE FIRST SCHOOL

- 7.1. This is obviously a very difficult time for everyone during the coronavirus pandemic which has resulted in the closure of the school, along with many other community activities. At the time of writing this report it is unclear how things will unfold over the next few months and so I will concentrate on the activities which are currently underway and our plans for the next few weeks.

Covid-19

- 7.2. The school is now beginning to function in almost its pre-Covid fashion, despite the occasional disturbance from the Omicron variant. In fact, there has been a number of positives, if you look closely. We have certainly reinforced the already strong relationship with parents, thanks to the incredible efforts of the staff, teaching and non-teaching. We have also learned how to integrate computing into home-learning, parent work-shops and general administration. We have examined the advantages, or not, of phasing start and end times. The jury is still out.

Financial

- 7.3. We have just set our budget for 2022/23 and, whilst quite demanding, it is not as bad as it could have been. The budget is manageable, with our usual prudence, and we are getting excellent advice from a bursar from the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT). We are managing to maintain the infrastructure of the school and have invested in more computing equipment for pupils and staff. The various on-going crises (e.g., Covid, Ukraine, energy prices) is having a major impact on costs, revenues and attitudes to funding education. We know that these changes will hurt but, as a fully-fledged member of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust, we have partners who share our problems.
- 7.4. Our excellent PTFA continues to raise funds for RCFS projects and, of course, they could not be as effective as they are without the support of our parents. Finally, as in every Annual Report, I offer thanks to our eponymous benefactor whose Endowment Fund is a source of considerable joy.

Number of Pupils

- 7.5. We are expecting a significant decrease in the size of Reception Class in September 2022 but when the large cohort currently in Year 4 leave us, our overall numbers on roll will reduce. We are planning for 115 pupils for 2022/23. However, there are always additions and subtractions over the school year and so this number will probably change. Also, there is forecast to be a large increase in Reception intake in 2023.

Staffing

- 7.6. We have an excellent full-time teacher in every class, well-supported by teaching assistants and, in many cases, parent helpers. We are very proud of our support of children with special needs (SEND). It is, quite rightly, very labour intensive but thoroughly rewarding for the highly-skilled and dedicated staff. Parents obviously appreciate and support our efforts.
- 7.7. Since my last report we have recruited two Early Career teachers and they started their careers during lock-downs, bubbles, on-line learning and the constant threat of Covid. They not only survived this baptism of fire but delivered a brilliant performance (if parent feed-back is any guide).

School Performance

- 7.8. We are expecting an OfSTED inspection during the next few months. This creates a slightly nervous apprehension but no fear: the adrenaline rush cancels out that. Published OfSTED guidelines stress the importance of an integrated curriculum and, more recently a focus on 'cultural capital'.

Key Priorities for 2021-22

- Improve standards across the curriculum by closing the vocabulary gap through helping teachers understand the vital role of vocabulary in all learning.
- Enhance outcomes for pupils with SEND by increased staff awareness and expertise through engaging with the 'Every leader a leader of SEND' programme.
- Develop a digital strategy which supports high quality computing teaching and learning, online safety and prepares children for the future whilst supporting the wider curriculum.
- Build on the experiences of remote learning to further augment parental engagement which supports stronger pupil progress/outcomes.

On-going challenges

- Constantly monitor risk assessments/outbreak management plans.
- Support staff and pupil mental health and wellbeing
- Narrow learning gaps and to develop remote learning in response to Covid-19
- Continue review the rationale and aims for the curriculum design.
- Ensure reading is prioritised to allow pupils access to the full curriculum on offer
- Induct and mentor Early Career staff to support and develop them.
- Ensure subject leaders develop their roles and responsibilities in curriculum design.

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

- 7.9. We are now full members of the ULT and are beginning to see benefits, particularly with regard to support with budgeting and financial

management, and computing support. These are not free services but are paid for, as were the services offered by the LA and Entrust. When Chairman Mao was asked what impact the French Revolution had had on China, he replied that it was too early to say. When asked how our membership of ULT will affect our future, I have to agree with Mao.

Summary

- 7.10. RCFS continues to deliver on all of the key strengths which support its continuing success, leadership, classroom skills, financial management and governance. We constantly evaluate the learning experience of the children and how well they are developing their life skills, as well as their command of the curriculum. We have seemingly dealt with the financial challenges for another year, but who knows what the future will bring. RCFS's response to the Covid crisis has demonstrated what capable individuals can achieve as a team. I give my grateful thanks to the RCFS leadership and the classroom staff; to the parents who support and encourage them; to the governors whose skilled and dedicated efforts are crucial; and of course, to the children who make it all worthwhile.
- 7.11. The latest news about The Richard Clarke First School can be found on our web-site (www.richardclarke.staffs.sch.uk) together with further RCFS details, photographs, staff and governor profiles, OfSTED reports and statistics and other performance information. I would encourage you to visit it.

The Village Hall

SUE PHILLIPSON, CHAIR

- 7.12. This past year has seen further work on the Village Hall including the replacement of the boiler and some redecoration. This is part of the on-going maintenance.
- 7.13. It has still been a difficult time and without the council grants, successfully, applied for by the Treasurer, things would have been almost impossible. Since users have been returning and there have been some bookings, particularly for children's parties, finance has become less of a concern. However, with ever rising costs, it is clear that the Hall will struggle to survive without greater usage and more support from the community.

Abbots Bromley Sports Association

CHRIS WOODS

- 7.14. The Charity has continued to invest in the community project over the last year, despite almost all major funding going to major causes from Covid recovery to the war in Ukraine. The Trustees are indebted to all our friends and residents who continue to give and donate and help to bring this rather large and lengthy endeavour to a close. However, as I seem to always be saying, “there is a great deal to do”.
- 7.15. So where are we exactly? ABCC is flourishing at its new home, and the pitch is now one of the best pitches in the league and certainly in the county at this level. The junior and senior football pitches have taken longer than we would have wished to be ready to host the Stags and ABJFC, but for those who have been down to the ground of late, they are now coming on wonderfully and we are confident that football for all will be starting in August of this year.
- 7.16. We have acquired new machinery to enable the best possible maintenance of the ground and the pitches through the Football Foundations grass pitch fund. We have had donated laid cabling to enable electricity connection to the cabins and eventually clubhouse, a marvellous contribution from Wayne Kingston, a local resident. We have had car parking created for up to fifty cars and soon to be fenced and gated.
- 7.17. The ground has become a peaceful place to reflect and remember with native trees and benches all with their own commemoration or dedication. We will soon make good two of the four stiles and footpath entries and continue to make this place accessible for all.
- 7.18. The Tennis and Netball Clubs are giving wonderful assistance and support to bring new courts to the ground to enable a growing interest in what is already two thriving clubs. With some funding from HS2 we are hopeful of this being in place within the next twelve months.
- 7.19. Clearly, we have yet to start on the Community Clubhouse. We have new designs, and a way forward, despite having to go back to planning, but how we fund this vital piece of the project will require a new approach, so watch this space.
- 7.20. Finally though, we have an exciting summer of entertainment and celebration at the ground. On 3 Jun, we see the village’s Jubilee celebration kicked off with a game against the celebrities of the Lords Taverners, a fund-raising lunch, the game and some music and dance in the evening. Then we have ABWI celebrating their own centenary in July with a tea party and tree commemoration, and finally in September we welcome back the Burbage Brass band from Buxton playing an outside concert.
- 7.21. Lots to do, and lots going on. Thank you everyone for your help, generosity and support.

Abbots Bromley First Responders

ROB STEVENSON

- 7.22. Our last report stated that we had acquired a new vehicle in December 2019. Since then, of course, we have all suffered the effects of the Covid pandemic. Operational restrictions slowed the number of callouts from the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) and personnel changes were introduced to the Ambulance Service structure, altering the categories of CFR callouts. We have been restricted mainly to “category 1” calls only, meaning suspected heart attack calls within a five-mile radius of AB. The downturn in calls has had a detrimental effect on our income whilst expenditure remains constant. Heartstart courses were ceased during the pandemic.
- 7.23. Additionally, we are no longer allowed (by national ruling) to use our sirens and blue lights, despite having qualified drivers and our protestations that this increases response times and reduces visibility. The ABCFR public presence has therefore been less obvious, but the parish can be assured that we have managed to remain solvent and active, with the total number of hours on duty being stable.
- 7.24. Following the changes, WMAS now have their “house in better order”. They have a new training course in place and are advertising for volunteers on a national basis. We already have one village resident booked in for new starter training and will be conducting our own recruiting campaign.
- 7.25. All of the village defibrillators are in working order. They have not yet been used (good news) but will need updating in the next financial year so we are launching a sponsorship campaign to cover the cost of replacement pads and batteries.
- 7.26. We hope to recommence Heartstart courses post-Covid, but our main concern for the coming year is recruitment.

8. Minutes of the Parish Assembly April 2019

Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday, 17th April 2019 at the Village Hall, Abbots Bromley, pursuant to notice having been given

Present:

Councillors: P Charles (Chair), Mrs A Appleby, B Walters, R Jarman, P Ryan, J Houlihan, Mrs M Moore, Mrs R Robb

Attendees: Mrs S Meads, Clerk, County Councillor P Atkins, plus 22 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Mrs A Roe (ABPCC), Mr M Hobbs (NDPG), Mr R Hall

2. Chairman's Report.

Presented by Cllrs P Charles and Mrs A Appleby

3. Parish Assembly Minutes for May 2018

Signed as a true and correct record by Cllr P Charles

4. Jubilee Cup

The Jubilee Cup was presented to Mr Simon Wilson in recognition for all his work in the village, including the Fire Service, Scouts and the Village Hall Committee. Mr Wilson gave thanks.

5. United Charities

Distribution of funds took place in December 2018. Those that received funds included the Friendship Group, Evergreens, Scouts & Guides, ABSA and residents of the village. Cllr Appleby signed on behalf of the Parish Council.

6. HS2

An update on HS2 was provided by Cllr Jarman. He explained that the Parish Council had been working with neighbouring Parish Councils, Newborough and Hoar Cross plus local residents as a working group to petition the government against the proposed power lines. Petition going to parliament on 23rd April. The group petitioning for consideration to be given to undergrounding the cables and for construction traffic to be routed away from the villages.

7. Neighbourhood Planning Group

Mr P Male provided an update on the NDPG (full report provided in the 2019 Annual Report document).

Mr Male said that the Parish Council restarted its engagement and conducted a review of the previous group's work. New group of volunteers came forward and authorisation given by the Parish Council to start work on 26th September 2018. During the intervening time the group had no authority but did meet eight times.

Following approval of the Terms of Reference an application for funding was submitted. Quotations were received from five consultants and funding would be available at the beginning of the financial year to be spent by the end of the year.

The group has provided opportunities for the village to meet. To date five meetings had taken place. It was disappointing that young people didn't attend the meetings. The group wants to ensure that everyone has an involvement.

Housing needs assessment needs updating.

In summary, the group needs support from residents of the village and wishes to involve as many people as possible so please do get in touch.

8. Open Forum

Mr T Rawlinson, Community First Responders. Mr Rawlinson said that there will be five defibrillators in the village located at the Village Hall, Top Shop, Goose Lane bus stop, fire station and ABSA. The units cost £2,000 each. Thanks to all those that have contributed. Having only had one first responder there are now new people being trained. Now hoping to build fund so that a new vehicle can be purchased.

A resident raised concerns over councillors stepping down and not putting themselves forward for election, particularly at this important time. Councillors explained why they did not stand for election:

- Cllr Charles felt it was time given his age and length of service
- Cllr Mrs Appleby said that she just doesn't have the time to commit
- Cllr Jarman said that he just felt that it was time to step down
- Cllr Charles said that the expertise comes through the Clerk

A resident thanked the councillors but said that he was very disappointed that none had chosen to stand again.

Cllr B Walters said that he felt that he was treated extremely poorly. People went about destroying trust in the neighbourhood plan and created bad feeling. He said that he has stuck it out as a councillor for twelve months so as not to trigger an election, but he has a bad taste in his mouth.

Cllr P Ryan said that he had registered for the election but later withdrew. He explained that he had done ten years but now spends a lot of time in Ireland and elsewhere and would be missing several meetings a year. He said he would still be there as a sounding board.

Cllr R Jarman said that the councillors would still be there for questions and available on the phone.

Cllr Mrs R Robb said that she had been co-opted on to the council. She said that there had been a lot of ill feeling created through social media and she really didn't need that.

Cllr J Houlihan decided to step down eighteen months ago and what happened at last year's Parish Assembly had reinforced the decision.

Cllr Mrs M Moore said that she found the decision very difficult. She said that she took the behaviour at the previous Assembly very personally and those that stood up did not give Councillors a chance to speak. She said that the plan is now moving forward and there are lots of vocal people in the village who could get involved.

A resident thanked councillors for their work and said that it was a thankless task.

Another resident said that nobody should have to answer as to why they are not standing for election again. They are quite entitled to do what they wish.

Cllr Atkins said that he had been coming to Abbots Bromley Parish Councillor for 32 years. He said that it is a thankless task, however, Abbots Bromley has great community spirit. He said that social media has a lot to answer for and was sad what had happened, and councillors shouldn't have to deal with that. He said that there is support through the Clerk, Staffordshire Parish Council Association and East Staffs Borough Council. He thanked the Parish Council.

Cllr Walters said that he wanted to put it on record thanks to Borough Councillor Hall for the work that he does.

Closing remarks from Cllr Charles, he thanked everyone for coming and also thanked Mrs Tonking for the loan of the presentation equipment.

Signed Date