

ABBOTS LEIGH PARISH PLAN 2005 to 2013 Summary

How did the Parish Plan evolve?

The incoming Parish Council, elected in 2003, wanted to put together a strategic plan for the whole village in conjunction with the Civic Society. The PC applied for and was given financial support from the Countryside Agency in April 2004. Following a plenary village meeting in May 2004, a steering committee of ten volunteers was formed, representing various interests and areas of the parish.

What is the Abbots Leigh Parish Plan?

The Parish Plan is a strategic document for the entire community. It outlines the issues and priorities that the residents of the Parish wanted to be addressed. It was a 5 year plan, which was to be reviewed every year. It aimed to cover all aspects of living in the parish with a view to improving the quality of life for everybody. To be of use, it needs to incorporate real changes which would yield tangible improvements.

But how did they know what was wanted for the Parish?

In April/May 2004, a number of residents were invited to 8 workshops. The aim was to identify the key areas of concern across the village. Using this information, a survey was developed and delivered to every household in June 2004.

This survey gave the parishioners the opportunity to tell the Parish Council about themselves and their families, the issues that concerned them and to suggest ways to improve life in the parish.

The steering group, with generous funding from the Countryside Agency, has now pulled together all of the key issues identified in the survey results and has created a series of Action Plans to move us towards our objectives.

How did this relate to the Village Character Statement?

A number of people have asked why we need a Parish Plan when there was a perfectly good Village Character Statement developed by the Civic Society in 2001. The answer is that we needed both: they served different purposes but they worked alongside each other. The VCS is concerned with maintaining and preserving the heritage and character of the village, with particular reference to its rural aspects and acceptable development. The Parish Plan is a collection of Action Plans to improve the quality of life for all residents, young and old, living in the parish.

After 8 years how have we done?

The majority of the actions identified in the Parish Plan have been completed and the Parish Council are continuing in the spirit of the wishes expressed by the parishioners in the original survey responses as new issues arise.

Notable exceptions or incomplete actions are:

- A village shop (commercially unviable and nowhere to locate it)
- Formal proposals for alternative uses for the skittle alley have been under consideration by the Skittle Alley Development Group (SADG) but have not to date resulted in firm proposals.
- More footpath links (negotiations continue at a slow pace).
- Village Market operated for several years but stopped due to lack of sustained interest.
- Improved car parking for Village Hall (nowhere suitable).
- Partnerships with Clifton College and St Katherine's (initiated but not resulted in meaningful co-operations).

- Partial success on the improvements to the A369 but traffic volumes have significantly increased over the last 8 years.
- Reduction of HGV traffic on A369
- Apart from the success of the Old School Field there are still few social opportunities for under 18s in Abbots Leigh

Next steps

It was originally intended that at the end of the parish plan period, a follow up survey and action plan would be carried out, but this would again involve considerable resources. Grants originally available to prepare the parish plan are no longer available and the Parish Council does not think that it should spend a considerable amount of money on carrying out this work unless there is a perceived demand or dissatisfaction with the way that the parish is being run.

The plan is to continue with the principles identified in the original plan but also to look for new opportunities and initiatives over time.

A summary of the original objectives and outcomes is listed below.

ABBOTS LEIGH PARISH PLAN OBJECTIVES 2005 to 2013

In 2009, compared with today, we aim to have achieved the following objectives...	Original Action Plan	Outcome/ Situation in 2013
Community Spirit and Amenities		
More people to be more involved across a broader spectrum of events and activities	Ensure that 30% of people who work on the Action Plans are new to village project work.	Over 50% of people working on the Plan are new to village project work. Abbots Leigh won 1st Prize in the Small Village Class for the DEFRA "Building Community Life" Award in 2006
There should be greater awareness of what is going on and a greater willingness to attend and contribute to village projects.	Organise Skittles evening to raise awareness of Alley and Summer/Seasonal Parties for children, in the Hall. Consider other events Evening for adults' films and Mornings for childrens' films. Consider refreshments.	Hall well used for party bookings and village society/clubs events for parishioners. Films organised for children in 2009 and further planned for the Autumn/Winter and in the future.
The planned improvements to the Village Hall should have been completed	The New Heating System. Car Parking PC will investigate ways of managing the current situation but options are limited.	Double glazing effective. Convectors in back under gallery changed. New ones less noisy & more efficient. No new areas have been identified which could be discussed with NSC. Continue to seek solutions.

	<p>Install large projection screen. Purchase of a projector.</p> <p>Better Seating</p> <p>New Fridge Freezer</p> <p>Drainage. Outfall from cesspit into adjacent field untreated</p>	<p>Large screen installed October 2005. A projector has also been bought</p> <p>2006 - 65 new chairs are in place in the Hall. (the old ones put in the Skittle Alley to replace older scrapped seats). Balcony & stairs re-carpetted in similar green to chairs.</p> <p>Both a new fridge and new freezer were installed in March 2006.</p> <p>New package sewage treatment works installed in the field with a soakaway in the Wills Estate field beyond (completed 2013)</p>
A development plan for the Skittle Alley should be investigated.	Depends upon the availability of external funding / Form a working party, incl. Rep from Skittles Club, to investigate and cost a variety of long term multi-use options.	The long term lease by the Skittle club was surrendered. A survey carried out in 2006 identified that many people had ideas for the skittle alley should be used for but did not feel that they would use it, nor would they be prepared to volunteer to help. In 2007 a new Development Group formed: Murray S(chairman), Gill C, Simon T-P, Robert N and Lee Godfrey. An extensive survey carried out in discussions with Planners had a negative response. Subsequent Drainage Discharge negotiations have uncovered significant financial implications
The farmers' market should be established	Depends on site / Should be self funding / Report to deal with Location, Parking, Quantity & variety of stalls.	Since July 2006 the Market has been part of village life with the Xmas event held also in the Skittles Alley. Following a significant falloff in attendance, Market halted at end 2010. Restarted April 2011, but again finished due to lack of support Christmas 2011
The Old School Field should be a popular venue for informal and organised social gatherings for all sections of the community and recognised as a valuable asset for social interaction.	Following successful upgrading of the Play equipment, the Old School Field opened on 22 May 2005. The CS provided a set of Boules, kept in Equip. Box / The CS to consider if it can be accommodated on its regular list of events.	Two Major annual events organised by the Civic Society on behalf of the Parish Council. The late summer Festival in the Field and the Annual Fireworks display. A boules competition takes place at the FITF for a perpetual trophy. The pitch is regularly used.. The CS monitors the Equip Box for losses and breakages.

<p>Partnerships should be established with Clifton College Services, St. Katherine's School and The George Inn, and more people should take advantage of these arrangements.</p>	<p>CCSL: The PPG to meet with CCSL and establish the key elements of a lasting partnership with tangible benefits for both parties. St Katherine's: The PPG to explore with St. Katherine's the basis on which a successful and mutually rewarding partnership can be built. The George Inn: Organise Parish Suppers</p>	<p>Little Progress on social engagement with CCSL.</p> <p>An IT course at St Katherine's in the Spring of 2007 for parish people (and others) has not been built upon.</p> <p>Monthly Parish Supper evenings held successfully for several years until the pub forced to close. The initiative will hopefully be resurrected with the new landlords when it reopens in June 2013</p>
<p>Environment</p>		
<p>Traffic to move more slowly through the village both on the A369 and side roads</p>	<p>Get Speed limit reduced from 40MPH to 30MPH through the village</p>	<p>Speed limit introduced through the village in 2005, Speed camera in place and variable speed warning sign in place by Sandy Lane. The PC still lobbies to get the 30MPH zone extended and in particular to get speed reduction at the junction with Dennyview Road. Another campaign to restrict speed on Manor Road and Manor Lane has been continuing since a survey was carried out in 2008. Negative response from NSC. This is being resurrected in 2013.</p>
<p>There should be measurably less road noise, light and air pollution.</p>	<p>Work with NSC so that when A369 is resurfaced it should be with low noise Asphalt.</p> <p>Encourage Clifton College Sports Ltd to change their floodlights</p>	<p>Resurfacing of A369 from Home Farm Rd to Sandy Lane was completed early March 2008. 'Quiet' material well received by parishioners. A369 Street Lights switch off at midnight except at junctions CCSL Have installed new floodlights as part of their new pitch improvements</p>
<p>There should be fewer heavy lorries on the A369</p>	<p>Discuss with NSC Highways the designation of the A369 as a local freight route and the Police the issue of enforcement.</p>	<p>Talks held with NSC on ways forward to ease HGVs on A369 through village. Feedback from NSC indicates that any reduction in HGV traffic would be unlikely as the road is a designated HGV route</p>
<p>We should enjoy well maintained verges and footways.</p>	<p>Continue to communicate with NSC on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Regular Liaison with NS Council.</p>

	<p>Verges</p> <p>Annual Litter Pick</p>	<p>The verge between Home Farm Road and the entrance to Leigh Woods was cut back in 2008. The Parish Orderly regularly cuts the verge between Manor Road and Harris Lane, alongside the Quarry and by Poundbatch Farm. Clifton College Sports mow the verge alongside their grounds from Ashgrove Avenue to Beggarbush Lane.</p> <p>A litter pick has been organised every year since 2004 at the end of March, substantial amounts are collected and removed by North Somerset Council</p>
<p>The Management Plan for Abbots Pool should be implemented and future maintenance agreed.</p>	<p>Assist North Somerset Council in drawing up management plan</p>	<p>Volunteer Workdays started in 2005 at Abbots pool and have continued ever since. A new bridge was installed by volunteers in 2005. An HLF grant of £28,500 was awarded for repair work to the historic landscape and dam. The first Green flag award was presented in 2007 and has been awarded every year since. A management plan was completed in 2008 by NSC. A new one is being drawn up in 2013. A grant from the FC was obtained in 2011 and 2012 for removal of invasive laurels.</p> <p>Abbots pool was designated as a Local nature reserve in 2012.</p> <p>A book on the History of Abbots Pool was written by Bill Evans in 2009</p>
<p>There should be agreement in principle for at least one new linking footpath.</p>	<p>New Path</p>	<p>Negotiations have been continuing with the Wills Estate and the FC since 2008 to create a permissive path from the school field path into Leigh Woods. Agreement reached in principle but no further action yet.</p> <p>Options for a path between Church Road and Leigh Court constantly under review.</p> <p>A path was investigated between Leigh Court and Ham Green and considered in conjunction with Pill/Easton in Gordano PC in 2009.</p>

<p>A new Footpaths Map should be produced and footpaths regularly inspected and cleared.</p>	<p>Footpath Map</p> <p>Footpaths</p> <p>Cycle Paths</p>	<p>New Footpath map produced in 2005 and available for sale. 8 Styles have been replaced with gates since 2006.</p> <p>The footpath alongside the A369 was widened and surfaced in 2008 with a grant from the Local Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund.</p> <p>The Cycle Path alongside the A369 is regularly maintained. There are plans by NSC to extend the current Cycle Path from Dennyview Road down to the Pill Road junction. Implementation of the National Cycle Network means many more Cycle paths in Leigh Woods and around the village.</p>
<p>There should be less litter and dog fouling.</p>		<p>Dog Fouling and lead signs put on access gates to Old School Field. 2006.</p> <p>Litter pick encouraged as an informal activity throughout the year.</p>
<p>The community should work to support the diverse and rare wildlife in and around the village.</p>		<p>Abbots Leigh Wildlife Group has been formed with their own website, regular talks and practical events and walks.</p>
<p>Heritage trees and hedgerows should continue to enhance our natural landscape</p>		<p>Additional trees planted in Home Farm Fields 2009.</p>
<p>Development</p>		
<p>The key principles and recommendations of the VCS should be upheld in terms of preserving the green belt and the integrity of the village fence, protecting the views and not permitting unacceptable development.</p>	<p>The Abbots Leigh VCS was originally accepted by NSC as supplementary planning guidance. Regrettably due to the many frequent changes in planning policy documents reference to the VCS was removed and NSC Planners no longer accept the validity of the VCS as planning guidance.</p>	<p>The Council has continued to protest the policy changes described opposite due to a number of approved planning applications in contravention of VCS guidance and despite ALPC recommendations for refusal or amendment. At present NSC view is that the VCS is a local reference document only and that compliance is unenforceable. A possible future option would be endorsement of the VCS as current policy within a local Neighbourhood Plan, which could then be used to enforce local planning decisions. There are however cost and resource implications in devising a Neighbourhood Plan.</p>

A sheltered housing development should be explored (but could involve a permitted breach of the village fence).	Carry out a housing assessment to establish the likely need/take up for an affordable housing scheme by the end of December 2006.	Initial Work was carried out in conjunction with NSC and English rural Housing Association in 2007 and 2008. This was met with opposition at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2008. It was decided to investigate small housing units as part of the proposals for the redevelopment of the underused Skittle Alley (See Skittle Alley Development above).
Creation of a conservation area should be debated and the pros and cons put to the village in the form of a referendum.	Conduct survey/work with NSC Conservation dept. to investigate feasibility of parts of the Parish being designated as a Conservation area.	Following discussions with NSC in 2005 it is clear that it would be extremely difficult to make a case for partial Conservation Area Status. No further actions taken.
The Younger Generation (Under 18's)		
A thriving village shop / café would be a popular place for both young people and parents with pre-school children to meet.		A new village shop is unlikely to happen without a commercial sponsor. Discussion will take place with new landlords of the George to see whether they can offer basic commodities.
Regular sporting activities, clubs and classes should be arranged specifically for the younger generation	Sporting 'champions' need to be identified within the village who would be willing to create various sporting clubs and events.	Appears to be very limited availability of volunteers.
There should be regular opportunities to get together at social events aimed at the younger generation.	Volunteers from within the village need to be identified to encourage the formation, membership and attendance of various clubs and classes.	Appears to be very limited availability of volunteers.
The enhanced Old School Field should be a popular venue for informal social gatherings of both parents with pre-school children and independent older children.	Regular Events in the School Field	The School Field is regularly used by a number of local children and visitors from outside.
Transport and Travel		
The cycle path would be a safer and more attractive option for both cyclists and walkers.		Footway extended past Home Farm Road in 2007 allowing safe road crossing to cycle path / bridleway. Small section added opposite Coronation Avenue to make it easier to cross the road. Path moved away from exit of CCSL

		<p>Cyclepath is regularly swept by NSC and volunteers.</p> <p>Cycle route is now promoted as National Route 334 of the National Cycle Network.</p>
<p>The cycle path should be extended to Pill, Ashton Court and onwards, encouraging cyclists to use it to reach their destinations for work and education.</p>		<p>Extension between Beggar Bush Lane past Ashton Court to the top of Rownham Hill completed 2009. The crossing by Sandy Lane, together with the resurfacing of the path between Leigh Court to Blackmoor Road in 2008 now makes safe cycling to St Katherine's and Pill possible. NSC have plans to build cycleway down left hand side of A369 towards Pill in 2013/14.</p>
<p>Affordable public and private (eg car sharing) options, designed to get people to their required destinations, should be made available to the village.</p>	<p>Idea to re-route bus down Bridge Road and onto Rownham Hill with drop off near Burwalls to give pedestrian access into Clifton via the Suspension Bridge. Consult with residents to understand alternative transport requirements, consider options available and gain commitment to a new service.</p>	<p>This plan has proved not to be feasible. No further action until alternative ideas are raised.</p> <p>Requirements of parishioners are unclear. The public bus service, though expensive, is more reliable. There is no clear need identified for a mini-bus.</p>
<p>Village Services</p>		
<p>People should be more satisfied with the range and quality of the services available</p>	<p>Community/ People express a greater level of satisfaction with the range and quality of the services available.</p>	<p>It was intended that there would be a second Parish Survey in 2009, to include questions to gauge whether people feel that objectives had been achieved. Without funding however it is currently difficult to justify such an exercise. The perception of the Parish Council is there is minimal negative feedback at present.</p>
<p>Mains drainage to be installed in part of the parish.</p>		<p>Houses on Pill Road and Blackmore Road are now connected to mains drainage. Council has made enquiries but there are no plans to extend mains drainage at present.</p>
<p>Mains gas should continue to be reviewed as an option for the parish.</p>	<p>PC/ MH to monitor the position with Transco on an annual basis, starting December 2005</p>	<p>No progress without substantial demand. Council has made enquiries but there are no plans to extend mains gas at present.</p>

The Recycling Scheme which covers the entire parish, should be expanded to include more materials for recycling and more people using the service.		New Recycling Service introduced by North Somerset in March 2010. Recycling levels now at over 60%. Dates and advice included in the Link
Communication		
Communication between the Parish Council and the parish should continue to improve		Monthly reports in the Link Magazine. New Notice Boards erected on Manor Road and Dennyview Road
More people should communicate with the PC - both positively and negatively - and more people should use and contribute to the web site.		Only occasional communication from parishioners which the Council responds to as
The Parish Council should use the web site to get feedback on specific issues.		Little Communication (see above) Email alternatives have been considered (village email list) but were discontinued following isolated protests.
Information regarding the PC and other parish activities/events should be available from a variety of sources and media.		Village website is kept reasonably up to date and Council are investigating ways of improving this
There should be better availability of printed information in the outlying areas of the parish.		Information is generally circulated electronically with important documents posted on village notice boards.