

**Abbots Leigh Annual Parish Meeting
Held in the Village Hall, Church Road
Wednesday 26th May 2021 at 7.30pm**

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Talbot-Ponsonby, Walker, Butler, Narracott, Stewart & J Smart (Clerk)
9 members of the public were present.

STP welcomed all to the meeting. He introduced the Parish Councillors and the Clerk. Each Councillor's duties was published in the Link each month. The Parish Council was very lucky to have Don Davies as its Ward Councillor, as he put in a lot of effort to the Village. He was now also Leader of North Somerset Council and Chairman of the Fire Authority.

1. Apologies

Ward Cllr Don Davies, Donna Butcher, Nicola Stinchcombe

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held in 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2019 had been put on the website. NSC had declared a Climate Emergency. The Parish Council had followed suit and declared a Climate and Environmental Emergency, following what other Councils had done. Any decisions made by the PC must now take this into account.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Chairman's Report

See attached report.

Quite a bit going on despite the pandemic. There was the setting up of volunteer coordinators, and the village now has a network of people on every road.

Parish finances were in good shape.

The Neighbourhood Plan was progressing, being led by MS. Councillors had spent a lot of time trying to liaise with NSC regarding traffic issues.

The NSC Area Officer was Shelley Lee, but unfortunately Councillors and Clerk had been unable to meet over the last year to discuss any issues.

5. Parish Council Reports:-

- a) Ward Councillor Report - Ward Cllr Don Davies was not in attendance at the meeting.

MS advised that DD regularly reported to the PC on planning and enforcement and talked about any changes at NSC. Long term Draft NSC Local Plan 2038 was being prepared by NSC and more consultation on this would take place in the summer months. The PC would report back as this developed.

- b) Planning - Cllr Robert Narracott reported on this. The aim was to keep a standard on all applications. There was likely to be a bit more focus on the Village Character Statement. Design standards were likely to be set for specific areas and may start using the Character Statement as a basis.

RN was asked how often NSC took the PC's comments into account. RN stated that because of DD's presence, the PC was getting a lot more reaction and respect from NSC. STP stated that the PC tries to listen to residents/neighbours' concerns. RN – The 'Permitted Development' rules were changed last year, and people may now be able to raise another floor on their houses. More information available on the NSC planning portal 'interactive house'.

DM asked if the village had a Conservation Area, would this prevent the permitted development. RN stated that the new rules would still apply in a Conservation Area.

- c) Village Hall - Cllr John Butler reported that the VH was closed for most of last year and had only just opened again this year. A few regular groups had returned, and there would be more to follow. Completed eliminating the sewage smell that was emanating into the village hall and the Caretaker's flat.

Sorry to have to say that JP would be leaving at the end of July. JP had kept the building in immaculate condition, and the PC would miss him. The PC gave sincere and grateful thanks and wished him and Jan a happy retirement.

- d) Financial - The annual accounts had been circulated to all present, and the Clerk reported on this.

- e) Neighbourhood Plan - Cllr Murray Stewart reported on this. More information would be in this week's The Link. A number of residents had contributed to the consultation. An independent Examiner had now looked at the PC's proposals and produced a report on it. Subject to a series of requested modifications, the plan would proceed to a referendum. This would take place in September 2021. Then it would become part of the statutory planning policy. Most modifications were straightforward. Made sure that recommendations and policies in the NP, it would mean something in how a developer may manage a planning application. The Examiner agreed to support the idea of the redevelopment of Orchard View and Somerset Lodge (care home and up to 30 houses), but the proposal for affordable housing on Chapel Pill Lane should be withdrawn. The planning application was now with NSC, and this would be decided in the next couple of months, should you wish to make a comment.

Paul Whitehouse asked about the Queen's Speech. MS responded that it was true that the plan could be overtaken by some of the events, but what was in the plan

could also override it. Committed to updating the plan in 2023-2024 in the light of national policy. It was a base for arguing for the future.

Jane Gibbons – thanked MS for his outstanding work.

- f) Conservation Area - Cllr Robert Narracott reported on this.
- g) Abbots Leigh Charities - Cllr Murray Stewart reported on this. Three charities come under Lady Norton's Charities for the Poor. Comprises for The Poor, The Apprentices, and the Vicar's Charities. A village committee looked at these annually. All had a capital sum, and a small interest income yearly which was distributed in terms of the above three charities. Small sums were distributed at Christmas to older residents that might benefit – 7 x £50 last year.

The Frys AL Charity was run differently and used for the maintenance and restoration on the church. This was not a village charity.

JG – very lucky to live in a fortunate village, would it be possible to share it with neighbours. MS didn't know legally but would investigate.

Neighbours could make nominations on behalf of their elderly neighbours. The Committee asks before Christmas for any nominations. Being aware of lonely people in the village was really important.

6. Any other business

None.

Annual Parish Meeting 26th May 2021 - Annual Report

Welcome to this Annual Parish Meeting, the last of which was two years ago.

I would first like to introduce my fellow Parish Councillors, John Butler, Robert Narracott, Murray Stewart, and Martin Walker. Our parish clerk Julie Smart is also the Parish Clerk for Pill and Easton in Gordano, and we are lucky to benefit from her extensive experience and the increased connection between the two parishes that this brings. I would remind you that more details of our individual roles/responsibilities on the Parish Council are included in the Link every month. Finally, I think that our District Ward Councillor Don Davies needs little introduction. In spite of the fact that he is leader of North Somerset Council and Chair of the Avon Fire Authority he somehow still finds time to attend to our local issues in his ward.

This last couple of years has again been busy despite the pandemic with a number of local improvements taking place. A positive result of the introduction the lockdown was the setting up a network of volunteer coordinators cover groups of neighbours along roads across the Parish to ensure that people had someone to contact when they needed help with anything

The Parish finances are in good shape under the attentive management of Julie Smart our Parish Clerk, and she will update you on that separately.

The joint Neighbourhood Plan with Pill and Easton in Gordano has almost completed its journey. Murray Stewart is leading on this for both parish councils on and he will update you separately.

There continue to be a number maintenance issues on the A369 that we try to work with the District Council to resolve. Often about blocked road gulleys, clearance of cycle and footpaths, rubbish bins and potholes. The North Somerset Council Area Officer that covers this area is Shelley, but we haven't had the opportunity to meet her over the last year to outstanding issues but hopefully this will resume before too long.

Within the last two years here are a number of revised speed limits implemented in the area that were being funded by Bristol Rugby Club through Abbots Leigh Parish Council as part of the development for their new training facilities on Beggar Bush Lane. These are the reduction of the speed limit on the B3129 Beggar Bush Lane and Belmont Hill. Also, the speed limit on the A369 was reduced from 50 to 40 MPH between Dennyview Road and Martcombe Garage.

We couldn't hold a litter pick last year, but I would like to thank the record number of more than 30 of you who came out to help in the litter pick at the end of March this year which resulted in Glendale the Council contractors having to come back and collect a second load.

A lot of effort continues to be put into the Village Hall. Thanks very much to John Butler who does a huge amount for the Village Hall and the fact that it is in such good condition is to his and John Prodger's credit, with support from Jan. John will update you on this following my report.

We have been investigating plans to put a car park in the garden between the hall and the skittle alley, but initial cost estimates are prohibitive so more work is needed to come up with a scheme that we can afford.

With regards to Skittle Alley, our tenants the Fit Tank have are continuing to thrive with a lot of support from the village and have survived the lock down. We have worked with Fit Tank to install large extractor fans to the building to reduce condensation.

The Parish Council have continued to work with Jason Cox of North Somerset Council in order to keep Abbots Pool in good condition for the local community. The volunteer working parties have restarted, organised by Jo Chiverton and our thanks are to her for the hard work that she and the volunteers put in. Unfortunately, Abbots Pool became the party destination of choice during lock down and North Somerset Council had no option other than to close the pool area to try to reduce overcrowding and to reduce the public health hazards. New Public Space Protection orders are now in place which make it an offence to go into the water and consume alcohol in public places. This will be enforced very soon when the weather warms up, so the message will hopefully get out quite quickly

Nigel Mail as the village orderly continues to keep the school field, the green and some of the verges trimmed back. The field has been very popular space during the pandemic as a haven to go and take exercise for people of all ages. We have installed a dog poo bin in the field which the Parish Council pays to get it emptied weekly and it attracts a lot of custom and the field is better for it.

In December 2019 we replaced the two council notice boards outside the Village Hall and on the path from Manor Lane towards Abbots Pool.

We welcome the new leadership of the Civic Society, and we look forward to working with them again in organising several events throughout the year and in particular the popular Fireworks display and Festival in the Field. The partnership between the Parish Council and the Civic Society working together is of great benefit to our community.

The website is a very valuable asset to the village. Thanks very much to Paul Whitehouse who acts as the webmaster. Please keep him posted about anything that is happening and if you haven't already signed up for emails, please do so. You can always unsubscribe if you don't want to continue to receive them

Simon Talbot-Ponsonby, Chair