

**Abbots Leigh Annual Parish Meeting
Held in the Village Hall, Church Road
Wednesday 11th May 2022 at 7.30pm**

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Talbot-Ponsonby, Narracott, Stewart, Walker & J Smart (Clerk)
11 Abbots Leigh Electors were present.

STP welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

1. Apologies

Cllr John Butler and Ward Cllr Don Davies.

2. Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held in 2021

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 26th May 2021, had been previously circulated and were also available on the Village website.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Chairman's Report

STP read his report (attached).

Jane Gibbons asked about the signs that would be going into Abbots Pool, as they would need to be consulted on. She also asked about the data from the recent speed monitoring, and if this could be shared. STP suggested a working group hold a meeting to discuss this. **Action STP.**

5. Parish Council Reports:-

a) Ward Councillor Report

Cllr Davies was not present.

b) Planning

Cllr Narracott reported on this. The PC had commented on approximately forty planning applications over the year, ranging in size from small extensions to

redevelopment of whole plots. Some applicants had sought early interaction with the PC prior to applying, which had been very helpful. Applicants and architects were encouraged to work within the Village Character Statement and the Neighbourhood Plan.

One problem was when applications were poorly presented, and in these cases, the applications were often objected to by the Parish Council.

Permitted Development rules had been relaxed in the last few years and were likely to relax even further. The Government had made a U-turn over the last 24 hours with regard to planning guidelines, but the PC was not yet aware of exactly how this would be implemented, but it was likely to be more community focused, and likely that the PC would have more power.

c) Village Hall

STP had reported on this in his Annual Report.

d) Financial

The 2021-2022 accounts were circulated to those present. The Clerk reported on this. Mr McFeat was concerned about the ever increasing Precept and the cost of the Village Hall, and suggested the PC look at the income and expenditure for the facility in more detail. **Action ALL.**

e) Neighbourhood Plan

MS reported on this. Slides attached.

f) NSC Local Plan 2038

MS reported on this. Slides attached.

g) Abbots Leigh Charities

MS reported on the Village Charities. There was little income coming in. The capital sums of all the charities together came to approximately £10k. The purposes of the charities were slightly dated, dealing with apprentices and historical issues. Awards were given to individual older members of the community around Christmas. The charities also supported a number of educational issues for young people with projects etc. All charities reported each year to the Charity Commission.

6. Any other business

Martin Walker asked about a property in Weir Lane where a large hole had been dug at the site. RN explained there was a drainage issue with the site. RN stated that the

owner was building a house, which look better than the previous one. NSC had not taken the PC's comments into consideration on this application.

Nick Ball thanked the Parish Council for the time and effort put in to making Abbots Leigh a lovely place to live.

Pip A'Ness suggested it would be good to attract a wider cross section of Councillors, and have some way of giving people some insight of what was required to be a Councillor. Clerk would make this available on the website. **Action Clerk.**

Di Stewart reported that a 'Tea & Tech' session was being arranged by WERN in the Village Hall. STP suggested advertising it and getting people signed up.

Meeting closed at 20:58

Annual Parish Meeting 11th May 2022 - Annual Report

Welcome to this Annual Parish Meeting or Annual Assembly of Electors.

I would first like to introduce my fellow Parish Councillors, Robert Narracott, Murray Stewart and Martin Walker - the remaining councillor, John Butler, is away on holiday this week. Especial thanks also go to our Parish Clerk, Julie Smart, who is also the Parish Clerk for Pill and Easton in Gordano. Her extensive experience is extremely valuable to us - alongside the increased connection between the two parishes that she brings.

More details of the individual roles/responsibilities on the Parish Council are included in the Link every month and are on the village website.

Our District Ward Councillor, Don Davies, is unfortunately unable to be with us this evening. He was leader of North Somerset Council until yesterday and in spite of the fact that he was extremely busy in his leadership role and that of Chair of the Avon Fire Authority, he somehow still found time to actively attend to the local issues in his ward. We welcome that he will be continuing in his Ward role as he is very approachable and supportive of the Parish Council.

Review of the year

This last year has again been busy in spite of the pandemic persisting throughout the year.

Finance - 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.

Neighbourhood Plan - The joint Neighbourhood Plan with Pill and Easton in Gordano has completed its journey. Murray Stewart leads on this for both Parish Councils and he will update you on this and the North Somerset Local Plan after I have finished. We are very fortunate to have Murray on the Parish Council as he has devoted a huge amount of time to coordinating a comprehensive joint neighbourhood plan between Abbots Leigh and Pill & Easton in Gordano Parish Councils.

Planning - The council have commented on a number of Planning Applications through the last year and we are fortunate that we have Robert Narracott, a very experienced architect, as a Parish Councillor. He will update you later.

Conservation area - The Abbots Leigh Parish Plan published in 2005 reflected the results of its questionnaire that the majority of the village were in favour of investigating the feasibility of designating part of the village (primarily along Church Road and at the crossroads) as a conservation area. An initial approach to North Somerset Council by the Parish Council in 2005 resulted in recommendations on how it could be improved, but these were never followed up. In order to decide this matter once and for all we had conversations with North Somerset Council's Conservation Officer last summer and an initial consultation was carried out in October. This was not conclusive with only 25 responses together with a number of

questions raised which resulted in the Parish Council deciding that a second consultation should be carried out. This was carried out in March 2022 and generated a much greater interest with more than 100 responses from both within and without the proposed area. The significant majority of the responses were not in favour of the conservation area. The Parish Council therefore concluded that we would not be taking the proposal forward to North Somerset Council for them to take to the next stage as it does not have the majority support of the local community. The matter is now closed.

Litter Pick - 21 volunteers who came and cleared rubbish from around the Village on the first Sunday in April. It looks much better as a result. It was good to find that there wasn't as much as sometimes but still a good haul. Thanks also to The George for kindly providing everyone with sandwiches afterwards which were very much appreciated

Village Hall - This last year has seen a lot of changes to the Village Hall. John Prodger retired in July 2021 after 12 years of looking after the hall. We are delighted that Mick Dillon, with his local connections, has taken the post of caretaker. A new on-line booking system with clear visibility of availability is accessible on the internet has been introduced as well as an electronic entry system to suit different hirers. This has been positive and adjustments have been made following lessons learnt. We have also had to increase the hire charges after 5 years and make minor changes to booking conditions with regards to cancellation charges and deposits. We are pleased that since the end of covid restrictions and with these new changes the booking levels have increased to above pre-pandemic levels.

With Mick Dillon planning to take up occupancy of the caretaker's flat we have taken the opportunity to carry out long overdue repairs and refurbishment to bring the accommodation up to standard. This has inevitably uncovered a number of unexpected problems that have needed to be addressed. Mick has contributed a lot of his time to keep the costs as low as possible. Hopefully the works will be completed soon and Mick and Naomi will be able to move in.

The plans to introduce a car park behind the Village Hall have been put on hold as the price was prohibitive.

Thanks very much to John Butler who does a huge amount for the Village Hall.

Skittle Alley - The Fit Tank Personal Fitness and Gym are continuing to thrive with a lot of support from the village, and have survived the lockdown.

Village Orderly - Nigel Mail retired from the post of village Orderly after more than 20 years during which time he kept the Old School Field and Green outside the church in good condition. He also kept a number of verges around the village trimmed as required. Kevin Weeks is now carrying out these duties as required. Kevin has already been doing several maintenance jobs around the village for a number of years and also works for Pill & Easton in Gordano Parish Council and other parishes. The verge outside Poundbatch Farm, opposite

Sandy Lane, is currently being looked after by the Abbots Leigh Wildlife Group as part of a rewilding scheme.

Highway Matters - We liaise regularly with North Somerset Council, who are the Highway Authority, alerting them to maintenance issues that are in need of attention on the roads. The one issue that dominates discussion is the volume and speed of the traffic on the A369 through the village. In order to be able to get an objective view of the issue the Parish Council commissioned North Somerset to carry out traffic speed surveys at six points through the village and this was carried out in March. The Civic Society has kindly contributed towards this work. We have had some initial feedback from the North Somerset Highway team and their brief assessment is that given that there is a very low incidence of injury accidents on the road though the village the speed results are in keeping with what they would expect on a busy road of this sort. They will try to work with us to establish if there are any low cost measures that could be introduced that might make a difference.

We have also been involved with North Somerset in the implementation of the Red Route Clearway around Ashton Court which included parts of Manor Road and Weir Lane - which the Parish Council supports. This prohibits people parking on verges as well as on the carriageways. The number of people parking along the narrow section of Manor Road, in the passing bays and on the verges has caused obstructions and has damaged the verges. The signage at the Pool entrance is acknowledged to be oversized for the location and we have asked for this to be rectified when a review is carried out in a couple of months,

Abbots Pool - 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 monthly volunteer working parties organised by Jo Chiverton have continued and our thanks are to her for the hard work that she and the volunteers put in. The volunteers put in new cycle racks provided by North Somerset council with materials provided by the Parish Council. Public Space Protection orders are now in place which make it an offence to go into the water and to consume alcohol in public places. The levels of antisocial behaviour have significantly reduced, but we are pressing to get positive informative signage in place so that people understand what they are not permitted to do.

Abbots Leigh Treescape - Thanks to Murray Stewart and Cat Abel who have organised the planting of 44 small trees provided by North Somerset Council generally along the Monarchs way through Abbots Leigh. The cost of the protection of these trees has been met by landowners, the Civic Society and the Parish Council. The Gardeners from the Nursing Home helped plant a number of the trees. Locations include Home Farm, around the church, the nursing home and several along Manor Road towards the vicinity of the entrance to Abbots Pool

Civic Society - The village has a strong Civic Society which organises several events throughout the year and in particular the popular Fireworks display and the 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 here go 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.

Finally, I would draw to your attention that there will be an election for a new Parish Council next May and we would welcome new people standing to become councillors. Many of us have been in post for a long time and fresh and perhaps younger faces would be a good thing.

Simon Talbot-Ponsonby, Chair

North Somerset Local Plan 2038

- North Somerset needs 20,000 new houses by 2038
- LP 38 identifies sites for 18,000 – i.e. 2,000 shortfall
- 3,300 houses proposed in the Green Belt (Woodspring golf course + Nailsea/ Portishead)
 - Otherwise there is protection of the Green Belt
 - There is an identified need for 4,300 affordable housing
- Rural Exception sites are possible but require very strong justification
 - Settlement boundaries are set for Abbots Leigh and Pill/Easton

Implications for Abbots Leigh

Joint response from Pill/Easton and Abbots Leigh Parish Councils

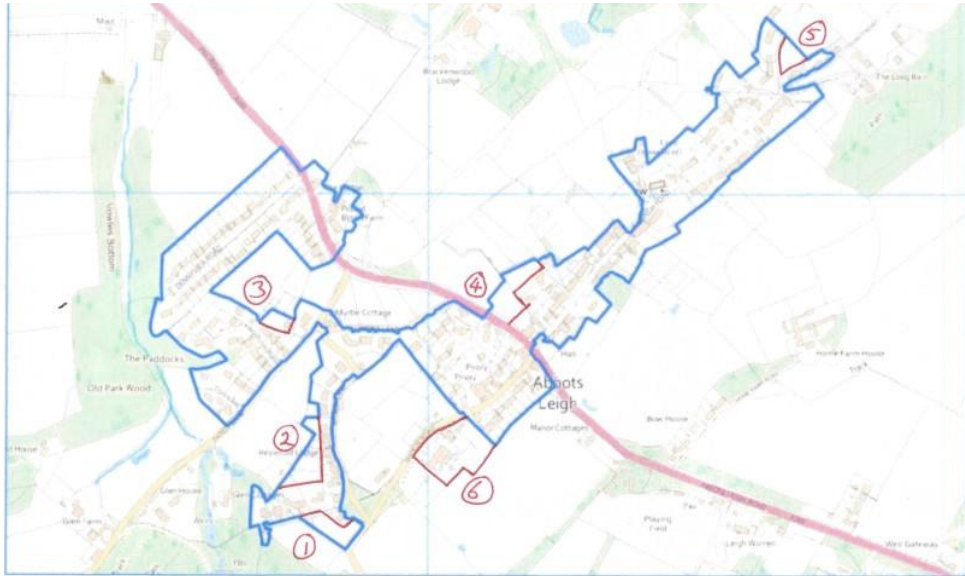
Welcome to no new development along A 369

Welcome to strong emphasis on Environment and Biodiversity

Recognition of need for affordable housing

Proposals for up to 150m dwellings in Pill/Easton/Abbots Leigh

Agreement with, but proposed revisions to, new Settlement Boundaries



**Abbots Leigh Parish Council comment on North Somerset Local plan 2038
Suggested amendments to Abbots Leigh proposed Settlement Boundary – Shown Red**