

PARISH OF ABBOTS LEIGH
Meeting of Abbots Leigh Parish Council
Held in the John Butler Room of the Village Hall, Church Road
Monday 10th March 2025 at 7.30 pm

M I N U T E S

Present: Cllrs Talbot-Ponsonby, Ho Marris, Delany, Das, N Rice (Clerk)
Apologies: Cllrs Walker

1 Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

- None

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 10th February 2025.

- The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10th February, previously circulated, were signed as a true record.
Action Clerk.

3 Matters arising

- None except those covered under following items

4 Planning

Applications:-

25/P/0248/FUL	Kingcott Farm Beggar Bush Lane Failand BS8 3TF	Retrospective planning application to regularise the installation of a passing bay at the lane providing access to Kingcott Farm (off Beggar Bush Lane). No Objections
25/P/0264/FUH	Oak Wood Lodge Abbots Leigh Road Abbots Leigh BS8 3QB	Demolition of existing structures and proposed erection of a new single storey rear extension with associated landscaping and internal alterations to the existing main house. No Objections
24/P/2718/FUH	Acorn Meadows Pill Road BS8 3RF	Proposed demolition of existing porch and rear/side extensions. Erection of a detached canopy carport to the front of the property. Construction of a 2-storey wraparound front/side/rear extension the, along with replacement of existing flat-roof dormer with 2no dormers and 1no. rooflight. Fenestration alterations including the removal, replacement and installation of windows, doors and rendering to all elevations. TBC
25/P/0147/AOC	7 Church Road Abbots Leigh BS8 3QP	Request to discharge condition number 12 (Construction Method Statement) on application 22/P/2502/FUL Approve (discharge condition)/(RDC)
24/P/2629/FUH	2 Manor View Manor Lane Abbots Leigh BS8 3RY	Proposed erection of a 1.5 storey extension to the North of the property and the addition of 1no. dormer to the rear elevation. Demolition of the existing conservatory to the front elevation and erection of a replacement new porch. New cladding to 2no. existing dormers and re-location of the existing driveway to the Southern boundary to give wider and safer access onto the site and infilling of the original site entrance. Refuse
24/P/2717/FUH	Woodleigh House Manor Road Abbots Leigh BS8 3RR	Demolition of the existing rear conservatory and annex extension, and proposed erection of a two-storey rear extension. Approve

Approvals/Refusals/Withdrawn:-

Other Planning Matters

Roots – Roots Allotments 24/P/1911/FU Since the last Parish Council Meeting additional documents, including a “Statement of Very Special Circumstances”, a Letter from Roots’ Ecological consultants, and a Biodiversity Net Gain Biometric, have been posted on the NSC planning portal. A further letter of objection to the application has been agreed upon and submitted.

5. Ward Councillor’s Report

- North Somerset Council has set a £235m budget for the year ahead, with a 4.99% council tax increase—the maximum allowed—raising Band D bills by £85.25 per year (£1.64 per week). Despite this, North Somerset still has the second lowest council tax in the South West. A major challenge is the £25m rise in Adult and Children’s Social Care costs (13% of the budget), which is expected to increase further. Adult social care covers nursing care for older residents and support for 18-64-year-olds with disabilities, while children’s social care supports around 230 young people in foster or residential care. The council is focusing on prevention, launching Family Hubs to support struggling families, similar to the former Sure Start programme. To balance the budget, NSC must find £42m in cuts and efficiencies over three years, with £20m in savings planned this year. Measures include: Switching to three-weekly black bin collections, saving nearly £1m per year, as 27% of waste is food, half of which is unopened.
- Scrapping NS Life magazine and making staff cuts, including the entire in-house recruitment team. Despite these cuts, the council continues to seek “transformation”—finding better ways to deliver services while managing rising costs.
- A worrying proposal for 2026/27 & 2027/28 suggests reducing library services to only towns, with a public consultation this summer. Concerned about this, I’ll gather more details from the library team and work with the parish council to develop a plan to protect Pill’s library service.
- One proposed cut not made was to the council tax support scheme, which helps low-income households, including those with disabilities. However, from now on, only those with under £6,000 in savings (down from £16,000) will qualify, meaning around 700 households will lose £38 per month. I met with Pill Foodhub, Jo, and Louise to discuss the impact, and I’m urging council officers to better understand and support affected residents. Despite these challenges, the council has approved £450m in capital investment (2025-2029), mostly funded by external grants. This includes Banwell Bypass, Metrowest, and housing projects. North Somerset exceeded its 2024/25 affordable housing target, delivering 238 homes (135 for social rent), ranking it among the top 10 councils nationally for affordable housing delivery.
- CEO of NSC has resigned and is now going back to Gloucestershire CC. NSC are looking for a replacement.

5.1 Neighbourhood Plan Implementation

- New local plan – Following our February meeting, Simon, Martin, and I met with Murray on 17 Feb to discuss the Additional Sites Consultation in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan. We agreed to comment on the consultation questions and specifically address two sites: St Kath’s Field (within AL) – Development here would be acceptable if reduced to half its proposed size. Orchard View (outside AL but referenced in the NP) – Already allocated in the NP for 24 homes and a nursing home, so we continue to support its inclusion. The site should be classified as yellow, not orange.

6. Financial

- Approval of Accounts for Payment for March 2025 – The updated accounts for payment for March 2025 have been circulated. STP proposed approval, seconded JHM. Agreed. **Action Clerk**

7. Village Matters

I. **Police Report** – December 1 x Violence and Sexual crime (1 Blackmoor Lane)

II. **Village Hall** –

- a. Solar Panels update. These are now fully operational after a slight glitch. We were paid a £13673 grant, which is more than the original grant of £13250.
- b. We did put in an additional panel so we will have a further invoice for £275. Net cost of the whole system including planning costs and upgrade work is now £726.52
- c. The meter is to be changed and there is a cost paid for changing the meter. This was paid by NR and has been repaid.

- d. Ovo initially told Mick the meter removal would cost **£120**, with him covering the standing charge until payment is made. We will pay the £120 as requested by the PC, the total installation cost for the panels will be £846.52, still under last month's estimate of **£875**.
- e. STP had circulated a progress report (attached to the minutes) including immediate payment of invoices in order to be able to claim the grant from NSC, which was all agreed.
- f. Jenna is going to look into Table tennis tables for the VH.

III. **Former Skittle Alley** – Nothing to report.

IV. **Traffic Issues & Footpaths**

- a. KD has contacted Tarmac Community Fund, via telephone regarding the SID but, as yet, heard nothing. **Action KD**
- b. Jenna has emailed Jonathan Gall at NSC regarding the SID review at Flax Bouton.

V. **Verges**

- a. The Community Payback Team. Community payback worked well on the last visit, taking a break from footways and removing about 8 tonnes of rock from the lower churchyard into a dumper to be recycled to another house on Church Road. The next visit will be on the second Saturday of April as the supervisor works on a fortnightly cycle. Resume clearing footway alongside Clifton College Sportsground

VI. **Playing Fields & Events**

- a. Further quotes have been received for the replacement and repair of the play equipment. It has been suggested that we go back to GB Sport to see if they can reduce the costs at all. . They have also quoted £1630 for repairs to other play equipment -replacement monkey bar beam, climbing net replacement and new Hercules pillar (stepping stone) . **Action STP**

VII. **Abbots Pool** - There is nothing to report.

VIII. **Civic Society** - There is nothing to report.

8 Communications

STP will write an article on Community Payback and JHM will write an article on planning for the Link magazine.

9 Clerk's Report

- The current use of the photocopier used by the clerk at the Resource Centre in Pill will now be charged.
- Internal Audit – NR has advised that a bit of housekeeping in regard to documents and policies will need to be done before the AGAR is submitted. It was agreed that documents would be sent to all Cllrs to look at and amend to bring them up to date.

10 AOB

11 Next Meeting - 14th April 2025

NR -10th March 2025.

Solar Panel Completion

The solar panel installation, rewiring of the caretakers flat supply and the rerouting of the skittle alley feed cable was all completed by Friday 24th January. The battery is due to be delivered Monday 10th February and the battery installation and final system commissioning is planned for Tuesday 12th, after which time the scaffold will be taken down.

Upon completion a certificate will be sent to National Grid (formerly Western Power) for them to confirm that they can accept the electricity into the grid, preliminary permission has been granted. Once that confirmation has been received we can apply to our supplier Eon to be able offer a price for exported electricity and also a charge for off peak electricity, so that we can charge our batteries off peak during the winter. An application will be made to National Grid to disconnect the old supply to the caretakers flat and hopefully take down the overhead cable into the hall.

At the final connection it was established that as the village hall is earthed to ground, rather than through the electricity supply, both the additional supplies of the gym and caretakers flat need to have their own RCDs (Safety trip switches) which have cost an additional £375.

The grant was offered against the quote received for the solar panel installation, a quote for the structural survey of £500 and a considered estimate for a new metered connection to the caretakers flat of £2,500. The minimum capital sum allowed for in the bid was £1,000 so that was the amount put in for the survey and a smaller amount for £1,500 for the new supply to the caretakers flat. The firm quote, already agreed, included an additional meter for the hall usage and the rerouting the supply to the gym from along the outside wall to below the floor, and also tidying the electricity cupboard layout to incorporate the 5 meters (Smart meter, incoming charged supply, solar generated electricity, hall, gym, flat). The breakdown of costs is on the following spread sheet. Total cost £24,125 plus VAT, Grants £23,250 being 96.4% of the cost. Net cost to PC £875.

We can only claim our grant from North Somerset Council once we have got receipted invoices from Roland Bell. I would propose that provided that Roland Bell invoice the sums listed below, that we should pay them upon receipt to be able to then claim the sums from NSC who want to get it all cleared by the beginning of March

Until we know our new electricity charges from Eon we will not be able to establish what might be a fair rate to charge our tenants, the Gym and the caretaker, for the electricity we supply them and a proportion of our standing charge. Hopefully we will be in a position to do so soon. Also we do not yet know how much we will import and how much we generate over the year, so we propose to take monthly meter readings and review our on charges and negotiate with our two tenants after the summer months. The electricity running costs for the Parish Council should be zero, in fact we may make a surplus towards the costs of running the hall.

The pre commencement survey had 81 responses, we need to agree a follow up survey with NSC and also demonstrate greater satisfaction with the hall and greater usage, as a result of installing the panels.

Village Hall Solar Panels Costs				
Item	Cost	Quote/Inv	In bid	Supplier
Solar panels	£8,925.00	3834	£8,925.00	Roland Bell
Scaffold	£1,750.00	3834	£1,750.00	Roland Bell
Tesla Battery	£10,150.00	3834	£10,150.00	Roland Bell
Caretakers flat supply	£2,235.00	4293	£1,500.00	Roland Bell
2 Additional RCDs	£375.00			Roland Bell
Structural Survey	£500.00	98071	£1,000.00	DEA
Planning application	£190.00			NSC
Total	£24,125.00		£23,325.00	
Income	Grants			
NSC REPF	£13,250.00			
PS Renewables	£10,000.00			
Self funding		£875.00		
Total	£23,250.00			

STP 10th February 2025

Update: Batteries arrived at distributors on February 10 so expected delivery is 11th February with installation and commissioning on 12th February.

Three names chosen using random number generator for the survey 79 Tracey Dodds, 24 Fergus Macbeth and 6 Damon Cooper