

ABBOTS MORTON PARISH.

Draft minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall at the 'Village Open evening' on Tuesday 19th April 2005 at 7.45pm.

Present: Mrs. M. Brewster (Chairman), Mrs. N. Holland (Clerk), Carol Marsden (Senior Conservation Officer), Mr. D. Lee and Mrs. A. Steel (District Councillors), Pc A Hamer, Mrs. Leng, Mr. and Mrs. Barclay, Mr. and Mrs. Izzo, Mr. M. Smith, Mr. N. Humphries, Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. P. Ansell, Mr. and Mrs. Brooks, Mr. and Mrs. Barker, Charlie Johnson, Peter Holland, Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Mr. and Mrs. Carew-Cox and family, Mr. D. Spooner, Mr. B. Oddy, Mrs. H. Whitlow, Mrs. Gisbourne, Mr. and Mrs. Adams, Mr. Ernest, Mr. and Mrs. Dykes and family, Mrs. Waldron, Mr. Burton, Mr. and Mrs. Pemberton, Mr. Richings, Mr. Hulse, Mrs. Payne, Mrs. Dunstone, Mr. Brewster, Mrs. Eason and Mrs Smith.

1. Welcome and introduction to the evening: The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was explained that after the formal part of the meeting was addressed that parishioners could talk to various representatives from Wychavon District Council and the Parish. There were tables around the room with information leaflets and exhibits as well as representatives available to ask advice or documents for comment on i.e. Parish Plan, Conservation Area review. Thanks were given to Carol Marsden and Pc Hamer for attending.

2. Apologies: Lord and Lady Walker, Mr. and Mrs. Humphries, Mr. and Mrs. Hobbs, Mr. and Mrs. Muscott, Reverend Thorniley and Mr. and Mrs. Holt.

3. Minutes: The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 23rd March 2004 were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed.

4. Matters arising: Nil.

5. Parish Council - Chairman's Report:

The Parish Council has had another very busy year with continuing and ever increasing responsibilities for our hardworking Clerk and nine Councillors. During the past year seven full Council meetings were held and three extra meetings. An extremely sad event in 2004 was the death of John Payne. John was a very dedicated Councillor and Chairman for nine years. He will be greatly missed. Angela Eason joined the Council in September 2004 as a replacement for Colin Turner who is now working abroad.

Again we have had very good attendances at Council meetings. Several Councillors have attended seminars and workshops on subjects ranging from Public Rights of Way, Councillorship, Chairmanship, Gypsy & Traveller sites, and Employers new terms and conditions. Abbots Morton Parish Council is working towards attaining Quality Status Parish Council. I would like to thank all of the Councillors for their dedication, time, hard work and support in particular Pat Ansell for taking over as Parish Paths Warden and Ken Barclay for assisting her. Derek Richings as Vice Chair and his liaison with CALC (County Association of Local Councils) and as a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator.

During the past year the Council have given time to discuss several important issues - among these were the Conservation Area Review for Abbots Morton when the Parish Council were asked to comment on the review of the Conservation Area in the village. The comments have been returned to the Planning Department at Wychavon District Council and the proposals are now available for Public Consultation until the 31st May 2005. Carol Marsden is here this evening with maps detailing these proposals. We would welcome your comments and if you have any questions Carol will be delighted to help you.

The Parish Council are hoping to join a County Council Scheme whereby funding is available to engage a contractor called a Parish Lengthsman - this is the equivalent to an "old fashioned road man" who maintains verges and ensures that ditches and gullies are

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kept clear together with other jobs. This will have the advantage of being carried out more frequently than at present.

Public Rights of Way - The Parish Council has agreed to join the Parish Paths Partnership (known as a P3 scheme). The Parish Council can bid each year for a certain amount of money to improve the footpaths in the Parish. Pat is in close liaison with Patrick White, the Area Access Officer for Worcestershire.

The Precept - You can be assured that your Council is very cost conscious and every effort is made to contain expenditure. Each year the Parish Council prepare the budget and informs the District Council on how much is required to run the Parish Council for the following year. This amount is then added to your Council Tax Bill and is known as the Precept. For the past two years the Precept has remained at the same level of £4700 - this is due to rise for the year 2005-6 to £5700. The increase has been budgeted to include a new package on statutory terms & conditions for the Clerk and a contingency fund for unforeseen circumstances. The money is used for-

Loan repayment for a grant obtained to rebuild the Village Hall; Insurance; Administration; Councillors / Clerk training fees; Audit requirements (part of which is that the PC has reserves between £3-5000); Employment contracts.

Parish Plan - .Our thanks must go to the steering committee who have formulated the Draft Parish Plan - this is going through the consultation period. There are copies available for you to look at and comment on. Jo Scrutton, from the Planning Department at Wychavon District Council who is dealing with Parish Plans was due to attend this evening.

Neighbourhood Watch - I would like to thank Derek Richings for acting as co-ordinator for many years. Graham Hobbs has now taken on the role of Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. Graham & Barbara have recently moved into Arden Cottage. The Parish Council welcomes them and other new residents to the Village. We also have a new Beat Manager for North Wychavon District - Annie Hamer. Please talk to her with any concerns you may have.

Village Green - Worcestershire County Council has now claimed ownership of the Village Green and will be responsible for the maintenance in the future. Our thanks have been expressed to the Ducks for their past help. The Parish Council did consider taking over the maintenance from Worcestershire County Council but due to new Health & Safety legislation and Insurance obligations the Parish Council agreed to decline. Bureaucracy gone mad!

A close relationship continues between the Parish Council, the Village Hall Committee, the Parochial Church Council and the Residents Association. I would like to thank Sarah Dykes and her committee for maintaining and running the Village Hall in such an excellent manner.

Once again the Parish Council and I in particular wish to thank Nicky Holland for her tremendous support and hard work. Nicky's dedication and input to the Council far exceeds the normal requirement. Nicky is an excellent and experienced clerk and is soon to be known as an Executive Officer. We are very, very lucky.

6. Open Forum:

It was asked if the Parish Council could address the issue of the precept particularly as new arrivals to the village were unsure on how their money was spent. The Chairman said that the matter would be addressed at the next Parish Council meeting.

No further questions were raised.

The Chairman then asked people to wander around the various exhibits that were on display and to give their comments to the representatives concerned.

Meeting declared closed at 8.05pm.