

## ABBOTS MORTON PARISH.

### Draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held Abbots Morton Village Hall, Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at 7.34 p.m.

**Present:** Mr. D. Ernest (Chairman), Mrs. N. Holland, Clerk to the Parish Council, District Cllrs. Mrs. Steel and Mr. Lee, and 10 parishioners.

**Welcome:** – the Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. Ernest, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies:** County Cllr. Mr. Holt, PC Tony Carter, PCSO Jenny Hawkins, David Smith, Angela Eason, Lord Borrie, Alan Footman, Rita Williams, Geoff Barker, and Jill Barker.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012 were agreed to be an accurate record, signed by the Chairman.

**Matters Arising:** Nil.

#### **Chairman of the Parish Council:**

As in previous years I will provide a short statement summarising the Parish Council actions during the past year and then open up the meeting to all questions of the council and any of the parish bodies represented tonight. I will attempt to answer any questions directed at the Parish Council but as I have missed several of recent meetings I may have to defer to my colleagues.

As an exception I will also invite the Treasurer of the Parochial Church Council to make a short statement regarding the forthcoming appeal for our church tower.

After this Annual Parish Council meeting, the Parish Council will move into a formal meeting with an agenda.

I do hope that you find the evening informative, and I would like to thank the members of the various parish bodies for their attendance and invite you to ask them any questions.

Firstly, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to all my fellow councillors during the past year, Nick Humphries, Pat Ansell, Clive Holt, Will Clapton, David Smith and Colin Pemberton for their support and work during the year. As ever, The Parish Council's ability to deal with issues and provide a high level of continuity is attributable to the hard work of the council members and their collective and individual experience.

I am also very appreciative of Will Clapton's continued assistance and support as the Vice Chair of Abbots Morton Parish Council.

The Parish Council is extremely appreciative of the hard work of our clerk Nicky Holland, who provides outstanding support.

Footpaths, their access and maintenance are very important amenity to both parishioners and visitors. I would like to thank David Smith doing a great job as footpaths officer for the Parish.

Finally Colin Pemberton as Tree Officer has worked with tree officers to effectively monitor and report on the trees in the parish. I believe that his report is available for you to read and I am sure that he will be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.

#### **Parish Council meetings.**

The Parish Council has had a positive and productive 12 months. We met formally 9 times last year, and also one or two offsite consultation meetings regarding highways matters.

During the year we have covered issues regarding drainage, road safety, maintenance and of course planning. Planning issues.

Planning applications and issues continue to take up a significant proportion of the Parish Council activity. The Parish Council has commented on a number of planning applications, some of these related to significant structural changes.

Whilst most of our comments were taken into account in decisions by the various planning authorities, we were disappointed to see that HM Secretary of State Planning Inspector allowed permission for what the Parish Council regard as significant development that is potentially detrimental to the Parish.

As many of you are aware, The Parish Council is invited to comment on applications. The Parish Council is also asked to report potential issues re possible planning enforcement and is in regular contact with the planning enforcement officers at Wychavon District Council regarding the continued monitoring of several sites that cause concern.

#### **Flooding, road and ditch maintenance.**

The Parish Council continues to use a Lengthsman. This work is funded by the County Council, and the Lengthsman

role is to carry out routine maintenance to the verges and ditches around the Parish. I am pleased to report that this work, coupled with the extensive work done by the statutory bodies has ensured that potential flooding risks are minimized and that the runoff from fields and properties is taken away in the most efficient manner.

I would also like to thank the local landowners for their ongoing cooperation ensuring that hedges are cut back, thus make exiting from junctions easier, and also appreciate them keeping their verges and ditches maintained.

Please advise the Parish Council of any areas of concerns re ditches, drains and hedgerows so that we can monitor any issues.

As you are aware Worcestershire County Council have recently resurfaced parts of the roads around the Parish. The Parish Councillors have expressed some concern regarding the quality of the resurfacing as despite a number of requested road sweepings, loose gravel is still evident and that in many cases it has failed to stick to the tarmac surface. Following a requested inspection by a Highways engineer, they have written a report to the Parish Council confirming that in their opinion the work has been done to a satisfactory standard and that some minor rectification work and additional sweeping will be done.

The Parish Council is in regular contact with Worcestershire Highways Authority to ensure that potholes are repaired. Again please notify us of any areas of concern.

#### **Jubilee Celebrations**

During 2012 Abbots Morton was very fortunate to enjoy a splendid Jubilee party. The volunteers and members of the Jubilee Steering Group, headed by Colin Pemberton worked very hard to raise funding and organise such a successful event. On behalf of the Parish Council I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation for all of the hard work. To mark the Jubilee year, the Parish Council donated a wild cherry tree. This was planted by children of the village. Again thank you to our tree officer Colin Pemberton for organising this event.

#### **Village Hall**

I would like to thank the Village Hall Committee for its hard work in both holding events that bring the village together and for their hard work in raising funding for its ongoing maintenance.

I am pleased to say that as part of its grant programme the Parish Council made a donation to the Village Hall Committee for its maintenance and it also ensured that proceeds of the New Homes Bonus from Wychavon District Council was donated. Also I am pleased that the Parish Council granted funding to St Peters Church towards maintenance of the Churchyard.

#### **Traffic and speeding problems at Morton Speart, C2010.**

As I believe everyone is aware, this has been the subject of many years of attention by the Parish Council. During that time we have worked with Worcestershire and Warwickshire County Councils to improve signage, road markings and bollards to be placed at the verge.

Unfortunately, our effort to press for a reduced speed limit (it is currently 60mph) on that road through Morton Spirt and up through Gooms Hill has been resisted by the various bodies. The only option left is to press the County Council for an exceptional review, which has to be sanctioned and sponsored by your local County Councillor. I suggest any interested parties contacts Councillor Holt to that effect.

During the year the Parish Council looked at an option of providing vehicle activated signage, however following an engineering review, suitable location sites in the parish were not found.

#### **Finance.**

For the fifth year in a row the Parish Council has kept the total annual precept for the Parish at the same level as the previous year.

Please be assured that we are very conscious of providing value to the community and are carefully balancing the need for cost containment against investing for the future, As I mentioned earlier I am pleased to say that the Parish Council was able to make two contributions to the Parish Communities; St Peter's Church for the upkeep of the grounds, and the Village Hall for ongoing maintenance. We hope that such actions can be repeated in future years. I would ask any community body that is interested in registering their interest for a grant this financial year to contact Nicky Holland or any member of the council.

Finally the Parish Council continues to benefit from an annual windfall of £307 pa for the next few years as part of the allocation of New Homes Bonus Scheme run by Wychavon District Council relating to proposed development in the parish. The funding is for community and infrastructure improvement and the Parish Council is looking at suitable uses of the money. I would welcome comments and suggestions.

Finally during the next 12 months the Parish Council will be looking at updating the Parish Plan that was originally written more than 5 years ago. We would welcome comments from Parishioners and specifically would be keen to recruit several residents to work with the Council on the review.

**Website**

I would draw your attention to the Parish Website which is managed by Worcestershire County Council. The website address is [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish)

**Matters raised by parishioners:**

a) New Homes Bonus Scheme: questions were asked on the allocation of the money to each parish. The Wychavon District Council website does not state clearly how the system works and why some parishes have more money with fewer properties. **Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel said she would inquire.**

b) Village Hall: questions were asked on who actually owns the premises. **Further clarity required.**  
The Village Hall Committee is very despondent due to the lack of support for events. At the recent Quiz night 16 persons were present, 10 of these were Committee members with their partners.

c) Questions were asked on why, following an inquiry was the agricultural tie rescinded at Morton Spiert Farm. Chairman replied that this was due to the size of the building; it was too large to be an agricultural building so there was no reason for the tie to be in place.

d) Thanks were given to the County and District Councillors for all their hard work and a vote of thanks was given to David Ernest as Chair of the Parish Council.

**The Parochial Church Council gave a brief overview of the Bell Tower Appeal:**

A review of the physical state of churches had been ongoing.

Highlighted repairs to the Tower required at an estimated cost of £40,000.

The Diocese has to approve the work. There has been a huge delay as certain items did not meet requirements e.g. stone from the quarry was not suitable. The matter is under consideration for a long period of time whilst the search for the right stone goes on.

The Church does have reserves but the cost of running the church annually is £10,000 plus each year.

The Parochial Church Council has decided to give £10,000 towards the £40,000 cost of repair.

A sub committee has been set up, headed by Colin Pemberton, to consider how to raise funds. Specific information will be sent out over the next few weeks/months.

It was asked if the Church of England will be contributing. The answer was no due to them mishandling their funds a few years ago. Many churches in the County are being closed because of huge costs.

The PCC has three years in which to start work.

**All organisations in the Parish submitted a report, copies available from the Clerk.**

**Meeting closed at 8.35 pm.**