

ABBOTS MORTON PARISH.

Draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Abbots Morton Village Hall on Thursday 7th May 2009 at 7.35 p.m.

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| <p>Present: Mr. D. Ernest (Chairman), Mrs. N. Holland, Clerk to the Parish Council, Mr. Ian Barber, Severn Waste, Mr. Mark Edwards from Wychavon District Council, County Cllr. Mr. Holt, Dist. Cllrs. Mrs. Steel and Mr. Lee and 13 parishioners.</p> |
| <p>1. Welcome – the Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. Ernest, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chairman thanked Mrs. Brewster for providing the refreshments.</p> |
| <p>2. Apologies: Lord Borrie, PC Carter.</p> |
| <p>Mr. Ian Barber was welcomed to the meeting along with Mark Edwards from Wychavon District Council who both gave an excellent presentation on recyclable waste. This is a brief summary of some of it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no waste hierarchy. The cost of waste is a fraction of the cost that went into its production.• Avoid waste by re using supermarket carrier bags, glass milk bottle. Some suppliers will supply items on 'draft' e.g. fabric conditioner.• If waste cannot be recycled then it is got rid of by combustion, filling a hole in the ground etc. At present there is 200,000 tons of waste underneath Hill & Moor.• He then gave an example of how packaging has altered over the years: A tin can years ago was made of heavier metal, transportation costs and resources were high. Today a new can weighs about 20g, is made of aluminium and is much thinner. Coca Cola are the biggest can producers in the world; the weight of their can has dropped by a third in the last 15 years. 7 billion cans a year are produced. It is an expensive operation and valuable as scrap.• Now looking at waste as a commodity.• The recyclable waste that is collected is taking to Hill & Moor at present. As from 2010 all recyclables will be taken to a plant off junction 7 of the M5 to Norton. All the recyclables are collected in one container, tipped out, manually sorted first and then taken over by a machine. He asked that all containers are rinsed. <p>Q. Will recycling bring reduces prices? A. Everything that is recycled is passed on. With the recession the amount of material will decrease. Worcestershire are managing to move all their waste, nothing is going into landfill. Other contractors take paper and glass. Q. Do wine bottles contaminate paper? A. Merchants are happy with the way the material is collected so this is not a problem. It all depends on demand and supply. Mr. Edwards mentioned food waste collection and talked about the biodegradable bags. The range of plastics that the Council will be able to recycle will be increased. Both were thanked for attending and providing an interesting talk.</p> |
| <p>3. Minutes: The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 23rd April 2008 were proposed, seconded and agreed to be an accurate record.</p> |
| <p>4. Matters Arising: Nil.</p> |
| <p>5. Chairman of the Parish Council: Cllr. Mr. Ernest gave the following report. Good evening ladies and gentlemen, thank you for attending the Annual Parish Meeting. I believe that you all have a copy of tonight's agenda. I hope that you find the evening informative, and I would like to thank our guests and members of the various parish bodies for their attendance. Firstly, as the incoming Chairman I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to my predecessor Clive Holt, and also Margaret Brewster as Vice Chair for their hard work as the previous Chairman and Vice Chair of Abbots Morton Parish Council. The Parish Council's ability to deal with a series of issues during the last year and provide a high level of continuity is attributable to Clive and Margaret's past commitment and experience. I am very glad that they are continuing as councillors to play a vital role in the Parish. I am also very pleased that Angela Eason has assumed the Vice Chair of Abbots Morton Parish council, and am very appreciative of her continued support. During the past year we reluctantly accepted the resignation of Lynn Pemberton from the Parish Council, as a consequence of an increased workload form her expanded role in the PCC. Also we were sad to see the recent departure of Derek Spooner</p> |

who has relocated to Herefordshire after many years as a Parish Councilor. Both Derek and Lynn will be missed, and we really appreciate the past contribution to the Parish. Derek has assured me that he will be returning in July for the village event and the dedication of the village bench. Angela will be providing details of this event later.

On a brighter note, we are very pleased that Pat Ansell kindly accepted an invitation to rejoin the Parish Council, and in conjunction with her role as Footpath officer. The Parish Council will be looking to co opt another Parish Councillor in the near future, please look out for notices inviting applicants, or I would be pleased to talk with you directly.

Looking back over the last 12 months, I am pleased to report that the Parish Council has had a positive and productive 12 months. Surprisingly we met 15 times last year (3 special planning meetings, 3 meetings of the Staffing Committee and 6 Full PC and 3 Special meetings to cover issues such as Morton Spirt, Drainage etc).

I would like to summarise the Parish Councils activities during the past year.

Planning

I would like to comment on one of the main themes that take up much of the Parish Councils time that of planning issues. The PC reviewed 7 planning applications, some of these were like for like replacements i.e. windows on listed properties and some related to extensions and we had several applications on the building of a new dwelling.

As many of you are aware, The Parish Council has a statutory duty to review these, and we have commented on most of these applications.

In addition to the planning issues, Councilors have discussed and pursued a number of local issues including:-

FLOODING AND ROAD AND DITCH MAINTENANCE.

The Council now directly employs a Lengthsman (compared with a previous arrangement to sub contract his work from another Parish Council). It is expected that this arrangement will enable us to more quickly and accurately respond to issues relating to drainage and maintenance. This work is funded by the County Council, and the Lengthsman role is to carry out routine repairs to the banks and ditches around the Parish.

During the past 12 months we have had a number of meetings with the County Highways engineer to review and work towards improving drainage in the Parish. The County Council engineer has been very helpful and we have had extensive surveys. As a consequence to these meetings, work has been done to our drainage system through the main part of the village, where we have experienced problems. The drainage system is now regularly jetted and over the past six months many blockages have been identified and cleared. In addition several sections of the drainage pipes have been replaced and more work is scheduled when there is availability of crews.

As a result of these meetings, Severn Trent Water checked and flushed though the main sewer pipe through the village.

We believe that the drainage system is now much improved and are pressing for the additional repair and replacement work to be done in within the near future. However the fact remains that in times of heavy and sustained rainfall, the main village road becomes the conduit for water draining off the surrounding area and the fall of the land and ditches sometimes prevents rapid drainage.

Following a grant from Wychavon District Council, the Parish Council purchased special sandbags for use by any resident concerned about their property being flooded. These are held at several locations in the Parish, and upon request to any of the councillors can be distributed.

TRAFFIC AND SPEEDING PROBLEMS AT MORTON SPIRT.

As you are aware this issue has been going on for a number of years. During the past twelve months we have had a number of meetings with representatives from Worcestershire County Council and have managed to obtain the agreement for some measures that will address the underlying issues of speed and lack of warning of the nature of the road (particularly the restricted road at the brow of the hill with limited visibility).

In essence we have agreement with Worcestershire County Council for improved signage, extension of solid white lines and bollards to be placed at the verge (the first two items have already been actioned by them)

Unfortunately, our efforts to press for a reduced speed limit have met with some resistance by the relevant bodies, which are citing lack of priority and funds but we continue to press piece by piece by piece to improve the situation. I would like at this time to acknowledge and thank the Residents Association for their support on this issue

VILLAGE GREEN.

After several years of toing and froing it has now been established that Wychavon District Council are the owners of the village green. Accordingly, the village Green is regularly cut by contractors on behalf of Wychavon.

HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

At the previous Annual Parish Meeting, we indicated that we were considering a Housing needs survey, with the aim of identifying those people that may require affordable housing. This has been deferred to be carried out this year

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY AND JOINT CORE STRATEGY (Wychavon, Worcester City and Malvern Hills)

This continues to be monitored closely, with Government decisions re target numbers of housing for the area yet to be determined. Currently the need for 24,500 new homes across South Worcestershire has been identified. The Parish Council has attended a number of meetings on this subject and I hope that the entire issue will be clearer this time next year, after the initial consultation period expires. It is expected that there will be a preferred options documents produced next year that will itself be subject to consultation with the communities and stakeholders.

At this time we do not anticipate any direct impact on the immediate vicinity of Abbots Morton, but we continue to monitor the situation...

Mineral Core Strategy

As some of you may be aware, Warwickshire County Council has commissioned a study on the Minerals Core Strategy for Warwickshire. This has resulted in some concern regarding the future consideration of expansion of existing sites and the identification of new sites.

On a local basis this has identified the possibility of new and expanded workings around the Dunnington area, with the site around Hillers farm Shop and the other side of Dunnington village being identified for potential expansion.

Your Parish council has responded to the survey regarding the Mineral Core strategy and has additionally and separately indicated its concern regarding these outline proposals, citing concern regarding traffic, noise and general disruption. It is emphasised that currently it is in proposal stage and no planning process has been started. You may rest assured that this issue is being monitored by the Parish Council.

Likewise as a footnote, we are also monitoring the situation regarding proposals for a Windfarm near Church Lench. Again, the only planning issue that has so far been raised is for some equipment to monitor wind speed and environmental conditions at one of the prospective sites. Again we will continue to monitor the situation.

The Village Green Bench

I am sure that you agree it was very sad that Dorothy Kennedy passed away last year, and I know that many will miss her presence in the village and at the various functions. However you may have noticed that Abbots Morton has a smart new bench on the village green. This bench has been commissioned by the Parish Council after extensive discussions, when it was decided to dedicate it to the memory of Dorothy Kennedy, whom as you know was a long time resident of the parish and ran the post Office and was also a Parish Councillor. This bench has been funded in part by the Parish Council and a grant from Wychavon Council thanks to the effort of David Lee. However we also received a substantial amount of money from voluntary contributions from residents and the Residents Association.

Parish Plan

It is the intention of the Parish Council to regularly review the Parish Plan. I am pleased to say on e of the key concerns, which of speeding at Morton Spirt continues to be addressed. I believe that the provision of facilities for the residents (young and old) of Abbots Morton continues to improve, with the hard work of village hall committee.

As I also indicated we are monitoring the need for housing.

Finally may I thank my fellow Councillors, Margaret Brewster, Clive Holt, Angela Eason, Don Humphries, and Pat Ansell for the unstinting and unpaid time and effort they devote to serving all residents in Abbots Morton. As I mentioned we are looking for another candidate for councillor.

Website

The Parish Council website has moved to a new home courtesy of Worcestershire County Council. It is now being managed by them and we hope in the future to benefit from updates and maintenance. The website address is www.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish

In the spirit of the new information age and to acknowledge the ever increasing burdens on the parish and its Residents, you will be pleased to hear that the Parish Council have adopted the Freedom of Information Act. As someone who works in the IT and information industry I yet have to fathom out what this Act means for most people. However what it does mean for us is that the Parish Council will be pleased to supply to interested parties documentation outlining its processes and actual decisions. Please see Nicky if you would like to discuss this further.

Finance

The Parish Council has striven to keep the annual precept at the same level as the previous year. However there has been an increase of 0.5%. 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.

And finally, I would like to especially mention the Clerk to the Council Nicky Holland. She works tirelessly to ensure that everything works smoothly and knows who and how to contact the various bodies that work with the Parish Council...and keeps

the councilors on the straight and narrow. I really must pay tribute to the excellent standard of her work. There is no question that the Parish Council could not function effectively without a Clerk of her calibre.

6. Summary of end of year accounts: Attached.

7. PC Tony Carter – unable to attend, report submitted:

Over the last few months we have had a few cars being broken into for car parts, this is a very unusual crime and items being stolen are, Head lights, bonnets, exhausts, and airbags. All these items are removed professionally without any damage to the vehicle. Areas targeted are Inkberrow, Crowle, and Himbleton.

We have also seen an increase in house burglary over the last two months in rural areas; we believe vehicles connected to these offences are.

Red Peugeot 309 J861 VJM

Blue Astra R987 ERP

Red Astra Estate N96 WRB

Also linked to the vehicles is a male who is approximately 40-50 years short light hair going bold, thick set in build and his habitual dress is Cap , Tweed Jacket and Wellington Boots (Country Gent) he would have two dogs with him one an Alsatian the other a whippet. He may state he is lost or looking for somewhere to go ferreting.

If any of the above seen please report to police.

Please don't worry we still live in a very quite beautiful place with low crime, and I would like to keep it that way.

9. County Cllr. report – Cllr. Mr. Holt said that he was preparing for the Elections that were due to take place on June 4th for County Cllrs and European Parliament. There is an array of candidates to choose from. He will be keeping an eye on the quarry proposals for Ragley.

10. Dist. Cllrs report: Dist. Cllr. Mr. Lee said he was pleased to be able to give financial support towards the purchase of Mrs. Kennedy's Bench through the grant system in his role as Dist. Cllr.

Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel gave the following report:

- Wychavon District Council has been voted the best Council for use of resources this year.
- The District Council part of the Council Tax has been kept at 2.5% for the 9th year in a row.
- Planning applications have decreased by 50% so income to the District Council is being affected.
- Vehicle Activated Signage is now in place in Inkberrow.

11. Church Council: Mr. Brewster gave the following report:

2008 has been a busy and successful year for St Peter's Church Abbots Morton, with once again many memorable events. The year started with us meeting as a Church Council, but has ended with us being restored to a Parochial Church Council with the Parish Boundary moving slightly to include Goom's Hill and The Spinney.

A full PCC of 9 was elected at last year's AGM, and the members have continued to work together as a team to organise services, and events to ensure the continuity of St Peter's as a focal point of village life.

The year started with us maintaining the electoral roll of 17 from the previous year. In July this was reduced to 16 with the death of Mrs. Dorothy Kennedy, a stalwart figure of the community and loyal supporter and worshipper at the church. She played an active part in the life of St. Peter's even in her later years when she would still attend events and helped by making Christingle and Mothering Sunday Posies. She is greatly missed.

Thanks to the support of regular worshippers and villagers, the "Church Locking rota" organised by Lynda Payne has ensured that the Church continues to be open on a daily basis, providing a quiet place of contemplation and reflection for locals and visitors. The comments in the visitors' book reflect how much this is appreciated. Similarly, the beauty of the Church is enhanced weekly through the flower arrangements provided by a cross section of the community and ably organised by Peggy Clarke. Both of these rotas helps to raise the profile of the Church within the village, and with the key events of Christmas, Harvest, the Flower Festival and Easter places the Church at the centre of the community. Audrey Dunstone's sending of flowers to members of the community who are unwell or in hospital enables St. Peter's Church to continue to serve the pastoral needs of the community.

The Church as a spiritual centre, serves the community through the regular weekly services, the 8.30.a.m. communion continues to use the Book of Common Prayer, whilst the monthly 11.00.a.m. and 9.30.a.m. services follow a more informal and interactive service style. These services are enhanced by regular lay led services which tend to follow a seasonal pattern and are well attended by the families within our community. We have thus celebrated Christingle, Mothering Sunday, Poverty, Rogation, Pet Service, Remembrance and our traditional Carol and Gift Service. The commitment of our younger congregation

was once again witnessed through our now annual nativity play written and produced by Delia Waldron and Isobel Carew-Cox. This year the meaning of Christmas was made evident through the retelling of the story using the visitation of "Three Wise Dudes" to Abbots Morton searching for the Baby King. Our thanks go to all of the children who took part and also to their families for their support in enabling its production.

This year has seen St. Peter's receive several bequests. The family of Millie Spooner has generously donated both a new "everyday" altar cloth and a white altar cloth for use at Christmas and Easter. The church has received a new Clavinova which enhances our musical worship, as a result of a joint bequest in memory of John Payne and Joan Sillitoe. The Church is also graced by our new cross made from olive wood thanks to the generosity of the Pembertons. Our thanks are extended to all families for remembering St. Peter's.

Members of the PCC have been involved with discussions within the Deanery on the reorganisation of clergy, as the Evesham Deanery needs to lose 2 clergy by 2016. Although progress has been made a final plan has not been agreed, however it is likely that whatever solution is agreed upon that it will have an impact not only on the life of the Benefice, but also that of the Parish.

St. Peter's continues to play a vital role in our community, and one of the many challenges has been to ensure that this continues. On a purely practical level this involves the maintenance of the building and the payment of our Parish Share. This has only been possible through the hard work and dedication of all church members. Within 2008 we have hosted the annual Flower Festival lunch, a Harp Concert and our successful and popular Harvest Supper and Auction of Promises. These social events are necessary for the financial security of our Church, but also play a vital role in bringing our community together.

2009 - The year ahead for St Peter's will continue to provide many new challenges. There is however a few key areas where our thoughts are focused at this time:

- 1] The Evesham Deanery review of clergy and the impact this will have upon us as a parish and within the Benefice.
- 2] The continuing financial commitment that is made upon our Parish through both the Parish Share and the maintenance of the church building. The 2009 Quinquennial Report will have identified areas for concern and help the PCC to prioritise maintenance issues.
- 3] An increase in the active membership and commitment to St Peter's by members of the community.

The roles and responsibilities that enables St. Peter's to function as a place of worship within our parish is shared amongst a small team. All play a vital role in the life of the Church, and sharing and team work make these tasks easier.

Mr. Brewster added a tribute to Kevin Clarke for working tirelessly for the Parish.

12. Neighbourhood Watch: Report given By Geoff Barker, Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator.

The roll out of Smartwater property marking liquid was a success and was taken up by many residents. Five Smartwater signs were obtained and are now prominently displayed around the parish. Window and property stickers were included in the packs. Orders can still be placed for packs if any more are needed.

Many residents have taken advantage of the email alert system. The email alerts are only for passing on alerts and messages received from the local police about what's happened in our area together with anything to report from our local coordinators. These alerts are also placed on the NW Webpage of the AM website, Thanks to David Smith for updating the NW Webpage. Please would you provide your email address (which will remain confidential) if you would like to be included.

Your Neighbourhood Watch coordinators, are:-

Gooms Hill -Angela Smith 792420, Morton Speart -Mary Whitehead 793397, The Low – David Smith 793107 (NW Webpage updates), Top Road -Tina Hill 792006, Village -Geoff Barker 792562 (Link Coordinator) . Many thanks for their vigilance during the past year. Thanks also to Peter Holland for many years as Co ordinator at The Low who reluctantly resigned due to work commitments

A vacancy still remains for a deputy village coordinator. Details of the coordinator roll are on the website, for those not having access, please contact me.

Neighbourhood Watch stickers for your property are available on request for display in a prominent position.

The Neighbourhood Watch webpage can be accessed by visiting the Abbots Morton website and clicking on the Neighbourhood Watch link.

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There are further links to the following;

A beginner's guide to Neighbourhood Watch.

Functions of a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

Useful Numbers.

If you find yourself and/or family in any circumstances of an emergency or dangerous nature, then you must contact Crimestoppers -0800 555 111 or dial 999 for emergency services. The usual contact number for West Mercia Police is 08457 444 888.

17. Residents' Association – report was given by Mr. Burton, Chair of the Residents' Association.

We have just circulated our first bulletin of the year and we have done so to all residents. This is the second consecutive issue that has gone to everyone and we have done this for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the Parish Plan indicated that many residents (more than were members) stated that we provide a useful services, and secondly, The Bulletin ranked third in popularity out of 9 sources of information. The Plan also asked us to focus on awareness and objectives. We also hope it might attract new members.

Unfortunately, Circulating the Bulletin to everyone is causing the Committee a dilemma in that The Bulletin is funded from members' fees and donations. We feel, therefore, that it is unfair to our members to continue to do this. We have therefore enclosed a simple questionnaire in the hope that residents will help us to come to a decision which will resolve this situation.

So far as my report tonight is concerned, there is little I can add to what you will read (or have already read) in the Bulletin. I will therefore just pick out two things which are worthy of special mention.

Since my report a year ago, the dangers to our environment, if not in the Parish itself, continue to surface. The proposed wind farm in the Lenches is one and the proposed quarry at Ragley is another. With these proposals, the list of protest groups continues to grow. Each of these has formed one despite having strong and effective Parish Councils.

The Ragley proposal is a real threat to us, surrounding as it would Hillers farm shop. I am in touch with the leader of the Dunnington protest group and we have offered our support. We have already written objecting and the Committee's letter is printed in the Bulletin. I do urge you to write your own letter of protest.

Finally, the Committee situation remains the same as a year ago with three vacancies. If this situation persists, the Association in its present form will collapse. No organization can operate effectively without a strong, full strength Committee. Sooner rather than later, therefore, residents will have to decide whether or not they need an Association like AMRA to support its Parish Council when situations such as I have described arise. Remember that two organizations working in unison can achieve much more than either one on its own. I am not alone in this belief. The residents of Cookhill, Stratford-on-Avon, the Lenches and now Dunnington have all shown that they too believe it.

14. Public Paths Warden: the following report was read out on behalf of Pat Ansell:

In the parish of Abbots Morton there are 15.56 km of footpaths and 4.45km of bridle paths and in total there are 46 footpaths and 10 bridle paths.

The wet summer of 2008 meant that the footpaths in the parish were not as well walked as in past years. It also caused a drain on the financial resources of the Countryside service, so that some routine maintenance was not carried out. But since Easter there has been a noticeable rise in the numbers of walkers using the paths

On a positive note we received a grant from Worcestershire County Council's Countryside Service for the fourth year. This grant which is awarded under the Parish Paths Partnership Scheme (commonly known as P3) is offered to local parish councils and aims to give local people the resources and skills to enable them to improve the condition of their local public rights of way and to keep them open and in use.

The grant, which does not exceed £1500 pa, also offers materials (gates, signposts, stiles etc); while for their part the participating parish carries out maintenance and improvement of local paths. This will be the fourth year that we been awarded this money and it has been used to install signposts, way markers and the steps in the field behind the church.

This year our request for funds to repair the collapsed culvert on the path to Slade Wood was rejected because the work is already scheduled by the Countryside Service, but we hope to be given a grant to repair a ditch crossing by the 100 acre field. I would like to finish by thanking the (dog) walkers who keep me informed of problems on the paths, and the landowners/farmers who do a great service by maintaining gates and stiles, and in clearing paths through crops, it is much appreciated.

15. Village Hall – Angela Eason, Chair of the Village Hall Committee, wished to thank all Committee members for all their hard work and support. All usual events have been carried out during the year. A drama event is planned for the 18th July. The Committee has applied for several grants and have been successful in some to help towards the

cost of heating the Village Hall and to purchase a sound system. Volunteers are required for the drama group and a children's summer drama session is being run during the summer.

16. Matters raised by parishioners:

Q. Is the Parish Lengthsman a direct employee?

A. No he is on a contract for services.

It was noted that the Village Green is looking much tidier.

Regarding the Church Mr. Brewster explained that the Church is inspected every 5 years. The stonework is not in good condition and this extra expense may come to the Church.

Meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

DRAFT