



AAPC Parish Assembly 31 May 2023

Held at Abbotts Ann War Memorial Hall on Wednesday 31st May at 19:00

Present:

Councillor Jordan (Chairman), Councillor Howard (Vice Chair), Councillor Wallis & Councillor Heather.
Borough Councillors Maureen Flood & Susanne Hasselmann, County Councillor David Drew & 6 members of the public.

Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from the Clerk.

Chair's Opening Remarks

Welcome to the Annual Parish Assembly for Abbotts Ann. This particular meeting is the one statutory meeting that we, and all other Town and Parish Councils throughout England are required to hold, and which must take place between 1st March and the 1st June (inclusive), so we are here just in the nick of time.

Unfortunately, this evening the Clerk to Council has had to send her apologies at late notice, therefore if there is the odd gap in the agenda I apologise.

The purpose of the meeting is to give the Parish Council, and other local organisations an opportunity to let local residents know what they have been doing over the past year and also look forward the coming year.

The meeting is also an opportunity for electors to have a say on anything they consider valuable to the people of the Parish. Any registered elector may ask a question of the Council which will usually be answered by the Chair, the Clerk to the Council, or a designated Councillor.

An elector may also make a suggestion and comment on anything pertinent to the residents of the Parish. This will be welcomed and is the whole purpose of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted as follows:

Introduction and welcome by the Parish Council Chairman,

Reports by Portfolio Holders.

Reports by Borough and County Councillors.

Reports from Community Groups. CLT and Sports Field Group have accepted invites to speak, no other group wished to do so.

General Q & A with the Parish Council

This is the first Assembly for this Council, following the election on 4th May. There are 7 Cllr seats allocated to Abbotts Ann, unfortunately this year the election was uncontested and only 4 seats were filled. Going forward we will look to co-opt willing volunteers to join the Council, but I do hope we can attract new councillors who represent the diversity of our community; to add real value and be genuinely representative we need Cllrs from different age groups and genders, something we will try and achieve as we go forward.

In looking back at the previous Council, it is worthy of note to how the drive to balance the budget and create a fully costed and planned budget going forward has stabilised our spending and made planning more robust, with Cllrs



able to target and ring fence funding for projects which means there is then an increased likelihood of being able to deliver.

The use of Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) also helps in this area. Without EMR the general reserves appear higher than it should and can lead to uncoordinated or unplanned spending or a misconception by members of the parish that we are rolling in money, which can result in funding for a given project being inadequate when that project actually comes to fruition.

For example, the Churchyard footpaths now have funding spread over several years as the project continues to slip, originally the monies were just put into the general reserves and spent, leaving a large budget entry to be made up. The same is true for refurbishing the Burial Ground fence, a project which remains on hold whilst we try to get a grant for it to help off set our own expenditure.

As someone who works in the Government Programme Delivery space with a current project value of £2.4Bn over 25 years, please believe me when I say that trying to manage a Parish budget causes me far more sleepless nights. The fact we can achieve as much as we have done, without constantly driving up the Precept is down to the superb support we received from the Clerk and the fact that Cllrs go to great lengths to get their budgetary forecasts right.

If I turn now to some of the projects and achievements:

BT Open Reach ultra fast fibre connections to local villages (or the Fibre to the Property FTTP)).

This initiative received widespread support from across all the local communities and is part of the governments wider national initiative to upgrade and ensure rural and semi-rural communities are able to utilise and benefit from modern, high speed, internet communications.

The installation programme is in full swing, and yes it's causing disruption and inconvenience. These are however short terms pains for what will be a significant upgrading of the village infrastructure.

Implementation Status The end of the FTTP infrastructure implementation phase appears to be in sight now and apparently Openreach and Kier are still hoping to be completed by the **end of July 2023**, we will see. To be fair to them, they have had a large amount of extra unplanned work mainly because of blocked or damaged ducting. For the avoidance of doubt, The project to install the FTTP infrastructure means to bring the fibre to the nearest pole or manhole of every property in Abbotts Ann parish, Monxton and seventeen properties in Ampport. When the FTTP infrastructure has been installed, tested and goes live next to your property, then you are able contact your Internet Service Provider to upgrade your broadband. Your ISP will then put in a request to Openreach for your property to be connected and an activation date provided.

Currently the ability to get fibre connections from the installed infrastructure to your property is limited by Lack of Openreach manpower resources and so there remains a level of rationing of signups.

The Fibre cable has been installed so far to Manor Farm from Abbotts Ann and they will continue the work on to Monxton. The infrastructure is just about complete, but that does not mean that everyone who wants to be connected can get connected yet as Openreach appear to still be rationing connection signups due to manpower shortage

Replacement of the sports pavilion, with match funding of circa £250 – 300k required remains a key target to be secured this year. The search for match funding is not easy, and the National Lottery have declined the grant application. More on tis issue in the Community Group updates. Meanwhile The Abbotts Ann Sports Field Group (AASFG), on behalf of the Parish Council and the Friends of the Abbotts Ann Sports Field (FoTAAS) jointly continue to ensure the pavilion receives some much-needed tender love and care until such time as we can build a replacement

The Introduction of the Lengthsman Scheme was one of the initiatives introduced to try and off set the significant and unforeseen rises in Grounds Maintenance charges. This and the work by Cllr John Heather to try and keep



footpaths open is one of the notable successes from the last 12-months. My understanding is that John will cover this in his report so I shall not steal his thunder.

Pan Parish Forum At its inception the PPF sought a number of undertakings from SW principle among were. Capital investment for wastewater infrastructure fit for current and evolving future wastewater needs - Failed
A commitment to stop over-pumping and – in extreme circumstances – only to over-pump when necessary to prevent loss of service to their customers or flooding - Failed
Assurances regarding the quality of the water in Pillhill Brook and transparency of the water test regime and results that demonstrate this – unconvinced when signs are deployed warning people to stay out of the water

After 14 years of such operations, tankering and over pumping are not 'emergency works'. The scope of such works extends through each of the nine parishes and the disruption is extensive. SW's budgetary provision under Planning round 24 (PR24), which is to be submitted to OFWAT this year shows no indication of any significant uplift in the capital resources required to address the issues faced and I have to report to tis forum and place yet again on the record my complete lack of confidence in the ability or willingness to hold SW to account and drive cultural change.

Delivering the Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan and enacting change through the PR24 business plans should have been a primary objective of the water companies (SUs). There is no evidence SW are seeking to increase their capex to deal with the issues we face we simply get Too little, too late! The OFWAT targets 25% reduction by 2025 of storm overflows / CSOs in the trade is unlikely to be delivered – the industry does not have the infrastructure to deliver and isn't investing to create the ability to do so?

What the industry is focussed on is Building back trust with the consumer. After 2 years of bad press what has changed? how has wavering public trust aggravated the industry's problems? • Understanding public concerns: what are the issues that are most critical for the industry to address? • Taking a proactive approach: how can the industry rebuild its reputation? • Promoting better understanding of the industry's challenges: what are the most powerful points? • Defining and communicating environmental and social purpose: to what extent does this hold the key to rebuilding trust?

This is where SW is focussing its efforts, this is what the PPF are on the receiving of. There is no substantive improvement in infrastructure, pledges have been missed, over pumping continues, polluting the PhillHill Brook continues.

The PPF took over 18-months to agree a problem statement. The problem is that there is sewage being pumped into our river and running down our streets (the last occurrence being on Bank Holiday Monday)

I make no secret of my frustration with the PPF. Thankfully Cllrs Flood and Heather are more patient and forgiving. As for SW, they advertise the PPF at national trade events as a success and a model of how to win over your customers – ladies and gentlemen we're being patted on the head, smiled at, taken on site visits to see things (boys and their toys) and stiffly ignored. Meanwhile SW continues to pay dividends, they aren't investing the required Capital to repair or replace the network and their board continue to focus on what I can only perceive as their two primary goals; protect shareholder interests and mitigate the impact of the continuous round of finds they incur for illegally polluting our rivers and seas.

Community Land Trust. The previous Parish Council fully supported the work of the CLT and going forward I would hope that we are in a position to continue to support such a worthy and much needed housing scheme that has affordable community homes embedded at its core. The CLT will be providing an update as part of the community group reports.

Finally, looking forward, where do I sense the priorities may lie in this coming year:

Securing the funding for the sports pavilion – too good an opportunity to be lost.



The deployment of FTTP will complete and should have a positive impact for the entire community, not least those who now hybrid work.

Burial Ground fencing and the church year pathways still need to be delivered, once we can obtain designs that meet everyone's requirement and raise the additional funding required.

Co-option

Support to the CLT affordable housing initiative. This is such a great initiative. We need to provide housing that our children or grandchildren can afford if they wish to stay in the village, and let's face it, why wouldn't you want to stay here?

PPF. My position is clear, it's a failing forum. The counter position is protected by Cllrs Flood and Heather, but for those who think SW will deliver – don't hold your breath.

Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes my opening remarks, we now move on to:

Reports by Portfolio Holders.

Councillor John Heather Summary of Activities in 2022/23

I am an active Parish Councillor since July 2022 and my first assignment was to manage and maintain the fifteen footpaths around our village.

I therefore joined the Hampshire Countryside Service and became a Footpath Warden and engaged two other volunteers who are part of our community.

I then obtained funding from the Hampshire Countryside Service a funding worth £2600.00 to purchase hedge and grass trimming equipment plus training.

The two volunteers and I attended training courses and achieved Certificates of Competence in Brush cutters and Trimmers and Outdoor First Aid.

We started regularly surveying all paths prior to trimming grass paths and hedges along with repairing and replacing footpath signposts. At present it is the grass growing season and we are out cutting two to three paths per week at present.

Another duty of mine is the Curator of the village Information Kiosk at the village hall to ensure it is updated with village information and kept clean and tidy.

I have also recently started to attend the Pan Parish Forum fortnightly meetings with Southern Water concerning ongoing sewage issues within our Parishes, and to report back to our councillors on any issues which concern our village and any future improvements to the waste system.

Amenities Portfolio Report for 31 May 2023

Civil Burial Ground (BG)

The project to replace the BG fence from Church Path boundary with the Churchyard to the boundary with the Old Manor on Church Road has proved very difficult to proceed with; with the Clerk finding it impossible to get further quotes for the work. She had got agreement from TVBC to apply for a grant explaining why there was not three contractors to choose from. The grant was due to be considered this month, but there has been some delay. The Clerk is discussing this with Our Borough Councillor (M Flood). Funding for this project requires the use of Earmarked reserves to ensure monies are available in year 23/24.



Maintenance of St Mary's Churchyard

The refurbishment of the internal Churchyard Footpaths has also seen difficulties with lack of interest from possible contractors and a complicated specification. Ray Lucas has assisted the Clerk with this project and it has gone out to tender action. See Action 1. Again, Funding requires the use of Earmarked reserves to ensure monies are available in year 23/24. The PCC has been informed of the likely shortage of funding and advised that they will need to apply for a grant as AAPC grants will not be available to benefit the Church.

Village Telephone kiosk

John Heather has done a splendid job and will update us on this.

Play Areas and skate Park

With the loss of councillors responsible for these as portfolio holders the parish Clerk has looked after this area without support and has obtained funding for several repairs and replacements. Someone willing to take this task on would be much appreciated.

Amenities in the Parish for which other Organisations or Persons are Responsible

There have been no major problems with liaising with other amenities in the Parish. Points of note include:-

Councillor Jordan cleared away a dead tree by the notice board at the WMH and sorted out the sticking small entrance gate there. He found that the main gate sagging was due to the gate post needing to be replaced. The clerk is actioning this matter.

I was chairman of the Parishes Coronation weekend committee and the Clerk dealt with the TVBC grant received. We sponsored coronation medals; free for all children in the Parish aged 15 and under whose parents registered them for one and for all children at Abbots Ann Primary School. Other parishioners wanting medals were able to get them at a small cost. The medals were very well received, as were the two events in the grounds of The Old Rectory over the coronation weekend. We await confirmation from TVBC that our Grant expenditure is acceptable and will then distribute any surplus monies within the Parish.

Cllr Gordon Howard

Sports and Recreation report for the annual Parish Assembly meeting on 31st May 2023

Pavilion

The pavilion function room has been used for weekly craft group meetings, monthly coffee mornings, monthly soup lunches and occasional meetings and parties. The changing rooms have been used by footballers during the football season.

Sports field

The football pitch has been used regularly by FC Anton and is likely to be used again by the Club next season. The goal mouths are in need of repair and quotations for the work have been obtained. The goal nets are in need of repair or replacement and the goal posts need to be repainted.

The sports field has also been used by the Muddy Runners and the Hampshire Dog Rally. It was also used for the November 5th bonfire and firework display. Two new benches to replace the existing broken ones have been acquired with the help of a TVBC grant.

Fundraising

Fundraising for a new pavilion/clubhouse and new sports facilities for the sports field is making slow progress. We still need to raise approximately £250K to match the TVBC grants already offered but we only have until the end of



this year before the grants will be withdrawn. We are waiting to hear whether our National Lottery grant application has been successful.

Sports Field Group – new members wanted!

Please contact me if you are interested in helping with the management, maintenance, operation and improvement of the sports field and pavilion.

Cllr C J Wallis

Reports by Borough and County Councillors.

Test Valley Borough Councillor Maureen Flood Report Abbotts Ann Parish Assembly May 31st 2023

First my thanks to the Parish Council for all your help and support over the past 12-months and for all you do to serve your communities. I look forward to continuing to work together.

Test Valley Borough Council offers a number of grants and funding to support businesses and residents. I highlight the Cost-of-Living grant scheme created last year following a special meeting of the Test Valley Partnership. The scheme sought to help ameliorate rising goods and energy prices, inflation and cost of living pressures that arose from factors such as the aftermath of the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The scheme has funded money management support, fresh food provision, a dedicated Citizens Advice caseworker in the Food Bank and School Breakfast Clubs

Test Valley Borough Council continues with the plans regenerating Andover Town Centre -our town centre and the Romsey Future Projects in the south of the Borough. The new Riverside Park, more pop-up shops, Second Sunday markets and the restoration of the Guildhall have been delivered: £6.5m has been allocated to the next stage of the Masterplan which is to uncover the River Anton along Western Avenue. TVBC are planning to submit a bid to the next tranche of levelling up funding for Andover. If successful, that would accelerate the plans to redevelop the Chantry Centre and develop a cultural hub.

Test Valley aims to give more residents more opportunities to recycle: enabling the recycling of glass, thin plastics (pots, tubs and trays) and Tetra Pak-style cartons in the same household recycling bin, as well as providing a weekly food waste service. In the near future we will be detailing further plans around implementation for 2024.

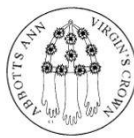
We are continuing the implementation of our Climate Emergency Action Plan. This year we have planted over 6k trees and have switched the fuel in our bin lorries from diesel to fossil free hydrotreated vegetable oil with a 95% reduction in carbon emissions in our fleet vehicles.

We are committed to continuing our zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping. We are the only council in Hampshire who assiduously prosecute fly-tippers - over 60 prosecutions in the last 4-years resulting in tens of thousands in fines, prison sentences and driving bans.

We have seen over the last year two happy historic royal events, Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee and the recent Coronation of Charles III. Test Valley Borough Council provided special grant schemes for both, enabling our communities, including Abbotts Ann to celebrate.

Turning to more local matters I look forward over the coming months to supporting the Abbotts Ann Sports Field Clubhouse Improvement project -a project awarded £250,000 from the CIL fund and the Abbotts Ann Community Land Trust Project.

Regarding the Gigabit Full Fibre Abbotts Ann scheme that is nearly completed – there has been much disruption over the last months but this valuable project initiated by Abbotts Ann Businesses to bring our village and those in



Amport and Monxton connected to the village telephone exchange into the 21st century. My thanks to those all those involved.

Newly Elected TVBC Councillor Susanne Hasselmann, my fellow Anna ward councillor, and I look forward to supporting Abbotts Ann Parish residents, all in Anna ward and the Borough of Test Valley.

County Cllr David Drew

Reports from Community Groups.

Sportsfield Group – Beth Deacon.

With regards to fundraising, we have unfortunately been turned down by the National Lottery Community Fund at this time. They have advised that they are following new guidelines for Community grants and they are currently all being focussed on immediate community needs due specifically to the current costs of living crisis. Thus grants are being given to foodbanks and other organisations that are dealing with immediate needs of local communities, rather than longer term infrastructure projects.

I have had a really good call with the regional grant manager from NLCF and she has advised that we would be able to apply for a small grant (£10,000) and encouraged us to do so when we have a specific thing that the £10k would be used for.

She was very complimentary about our proposal and encouraged us to keep going with the plans.

I was planning on setting up a meeting with Kate Bone, Chris Wallis & Jon Deacon in early June to discuss thoughts on how best to proceed and to then report to the PC at the July meeting - it's rather short notice for this week's PC meeting so hope that you will be able to add this to the July agenda instead.

I am waiting for a call back from the gentleman who managed the CIL grants at TVBC as I have a number of things that I would like him to clarify before giving everyone a full update. For example, the National Lottery Community Fund grant manager was very surprised that we have been asked to match fund the CIL money as they have worked with lots of groups in receipt of CIL across the South who have not been asked to match fund.

Abbotts Ann Community Land Trust

Report - Annual Report to Abbotts Ann Parish Meeting
31 May 2023

Brief background

Abbotts Ann Community Land Trust ("AACLT") is a Community Benefits Society established to provide housing in the village of Abbotts Ann along with other community benefits.

Our overall aim is to provide:

- affordable housing (especially for young people) who have connections in the village and could not otherwise afford to live there;
- private housing suitable for people who, especially because of age or disability, want to move to something more suitable.

We identified a site adjoining the Abbotts Ann Primary School in Duck Street and we commissioned a design that echoes the character of Abbotts Ann.

We want the development to be of excellent design and have high standards of energy efficiency.



The planning policy that will allow houses to be built outside the settlement boundary requires us to show community benefit and the support of the community.

In a public meeting and two public consultations the proposals have met with the overwhelming support of the village.

Development partner.

We originally selected Haygarth Ross a locally based development company as our development partner to buy the land, build the development, sell the Affordable dwellings to a Housing Association and the market houses to individual buyers.

Unfortunately, last year, Haygarth Ross, had to withdraw from the project because of the economic situation and in particular the considerable increase in costs of construction. That has meant looking for another developer with the right commitment to good design and sustainability and who is also acceptable to the land owner.

We have selected a company called Oxford Advanced Living and have been working with them and the land owner's agents to agree Heads of Terms for an agreement that will give OAL the option to buy the land and a Development Agreement between OAL and AACL that will include our requirements for the content and standards of the development.

Nutrient mitigation.

A further delaying factor has been the requirement to prevent or mitigate harm caused to marine habitats in the Solent estuary by an increase in the discharge of nutrients (Nitrogen and Phosphorous) in waste water or in the ground, this problem has put a freeze on house building in many parts of the country. ¹ A project such as a housing development can only be allowed to proceed if the amount of any increase in nutrient discharge is fully mitigated.

There are a number of schemes being developed in the Solent catchment whereby land in an existing use such as agriculture is converted to a use with a lower nutrient content and credits sold to developers to mitigate the nutrient discharge from a proposed development site. OAL will select an operator of an approved mitigation scheme from which to buy credits so that the increase in nitrates is effectively neutralised.

Next steps.

Once the Option Agreement has been signed-off we will finalise the planning application including discussion with the Parish Council and carry out further community consultation. We are hopeful that real progress can be made and a planning application submitted during the next few months.

¹ The House Builder's Federation says that 120,000 new homes have been blocked.

Village Groups

31st May 2023

A couple of years ago membership of our WI was dwindling and so we set about increasing it. We were fortunate enough to have received a sum of money from the Parish Council to help us through the aftermath of the pandemic and so we used some of this money to hold a recruitment drive and circulated the village with invitations to a Fizz and Canapé evening. This event was very successful for our WI and we now have around 35 members.

Our members are very important to us and we like to offer them a lively programme. I have with me rough details of our forthcoming programme. We kick off with a guided tour of Hilliers Arboretum.

At the end of June our speaker is going to teach us how to use make-up our older skins and looks. Our annual coach trip is to Windsor this year and is on the 3rd August with an optional tour around the castle. If interested please let me know. We still have some availability.



In December we have a duo of ladies who are going to entertain us with songs from the 40's and 50's as well as our usual bring a plate of food and fizz is provided.

Our annual post Christmas lunch is at Esseborne and we try to subsidise it so that it's affordable for all. It's something many look forward to all year.

We are an outward looking WI offering as much as we can with a monthly coffee morning held at the Pavillion on the second Thursday of the month and available to all.

We have a walking group followed by lunch and a supper club which operates mostly in the spring and summer months. We also have a Book Club who are looking for more members and we are always open to new ideas.

We also support village events when we can and have recently supported the Plant Sale and for many years have provided the refreshments for the fete including supplying all the cakes at nil cost to the Fete Committee. Recently we helped with the Coronation celebrations including lending our newly discovered God Save the King banner.

I'm afraid you need to be a woman to join the WI so if you are, please come along either to a monthly meeting or to our Coffee Morning where you will receive a warm welcome. Visitors can come to our monthly meeting for £5 to see if they like it and join at a later date or to our Coffee Morning where coffee and biscuits or cake sometimes, for around £2.

If you or someone you know would like to join us please contact either myself - Lynne Lucas or Aileen Catterson. All our information is in the telephone box.

General Q & A with the Parish Council

No questions were received, therefore the meeting was closed.