



# Abbotts Ann Parish Council

## MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2004

Held in the War Memorial Hall on St George's Day, Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2004 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Mr B Griffiths (Chairman) Mr B Sims  
Mr P Stanton Mr G Whyte  
Mrs P Wilkins

In Attendance: Cllr P Pierce (HCC)  
Cllr M Townsend (TVBC)  
Mr R Lucas (Abbotts Ann Action / War Memorial Hall)  
Ms E Dell (Fête Committee)  
Mr D Downey (Hon Footpath Officer / Neighbourhood Watch)  
Mr G Howard (Abbotts Ann Parochial Church Council)  
Mrs G Howard (Village Shop Association)  
Mr K Emerson (Sports Field Management Committee)  
Dr J Moon (Hon Tree Warden)  
Lt Col K Lawton (Parish Clerk)  
And 10 members of the public.

1. **Welcome.** The Chairman welcomed all those present.
2. **Apologies for Absence.** Apologies had been received from: Cllr A Peters, Prof Gibson, Mr S Oram, Mr J Barlow, Mr M Butt and Sgt Phillips (Weyhill Police Station).
3. **To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly – 25<sup>th</sup> April 2003.** (*Proposed: Cllr Townsend, Seconded: Mrs Wilkins, Approved.*)
4. **Observations by the Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Coordinator.** Mr Downey, on behalf of Mr Butt reported that:

“The year has shown a marked drop in the number of incidents, down from 39 last year (April 2002 to April 2003) to 17 this year, (April 2003 to April 2004). This may have been due to the increased interest in the NHW scheme, which everyone in the village belongs to, or it may be that crime in the area has fallen. I agree with Mr Butt, who believes it is mainly due to the NHW scheme. This is emphasized by the number of reports he receives weekly. This is good to see and shows how more people are becoming conscious of potential problems.

Most of the year's incidents have been of the minor or nuisance type but, once again, we have had three burglaries - two to the same property but nine months apart. A similar MO has been identified involving children as well as adults. I would like to emphasize that the whole of our local police area has been subject to a number of distraction burglaries and opportunist thefts, so the threat is always present.

The local co-ordinators, who support Mr Butt, continue to do a sterling service in their respective areas and their help is much appreciated. We are also indebted to our Beat Officer, PC Ian Robinson, for his assistance with village incidents as well as the support we receive

from Sgt. Phillips. Mr Butt publishes a monthly bulletin for the Parish Community Magazine, it is also posted on the village notice boards. He also delivers a quarterly news letter to the occupants of the Old Peoples Bungalows at Bulbery, this enables these village residents to be kept up to date with the latest scams etc.

Mr. Chairman, Mike has asked me to say that he is happy to report that the NHW scheme remains active in Abbots Ann.

## **POLICE REPORT**

The local police, from Weyhill, have been unable to attend this year's APA and so I have been asked to make a comment on their behalf regarding teenagers who create a nuisance. The police are usually unable to act because they cannot get to the scene quickly enough, so I have been asked to request that parents should take more interest in what their children are doing and, if they hear that their children have been causing a nuisance, to exercise proper parental control."

5. **Annual Report of the Abbots Ann Parish Council.** The Chairman's Report can be seen at Annex A.

6. **Statement of the Parish Council's Accounts for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.** The Annual Accounts, attached at Annex B, were presented by the Clerk.

7. **To receive the Parish Council's observations on its finances for the coming year.** In the absence of Prof Gibson the Clerk read out Prof Gibson's statement:

"Not surprisingly, since the Parish Council spends your money very carefully, we are projecting expenditure in the year ahead at a similar level to last year - with budgeted costs of almost £17,500 excluding those associated with the burial ground.

We have set our precept for the year at £18,000, and while this is £1,000 more than last year to maintain our reserves, the actual increase in the Parish element of the Council Tax payable in Abbots Ann has risen by less than 1% because of the increase in the number of ratepayers - since new properties in the development west of Floral way are within the boundary of this Parish. Where will this money go? Larger items in the budget include:

Administration and Clerk's costs	£6,810
Village Shop loan repayment	£2,052
Insurance premiums	£1,700
Sports Field grant and costs	£1,700

After the significant capital expenditure in the last year, including the village entrance signs and the new playground equipment, we have no major projects scheduled for the year ahead. A provision of £1,000 has been made to meet the possibility of needing to contribute with HCC towards the costs of traffic calming measures at the Jubilee Oak if these are made permanent. The Parish has yet to draw upon the sum of £5,000 currently held by TVBC that was paid by the developer of King's Yard and which is to be spent on recreation facilities. I can reassure you that the Council will continue to spend your money with great care, and if anyone present

has any thoughts on future capital projects, do please let us know.”

*(Following a question later in the Meeting from Mr Howard, the Chairman assured those present that the grants made by the Parish Council, including Section 137 grants, were not standing payments and had to be justified each year to the Council and were considered in open committee at Parish Council Meetings.)*

8. **To adopt the Parish Council Accounts for the year 2003 – 2004.** They were adopted unanimously by the Meeting *(Proposed Mr Downey, Seconded: Cllr Pierce).*

9. **Statement by Cllr P Pierce, HCC.** The following statement was made by Cllr Pierce:

“I will not try to relate all the happenings at the County over the last year as this would take more time than I have been allocated and in any case most matters have been reported in the County news paper ‘HAMPSHIRE NOW’ which is delivered free to your door, but there are one or two things which may be of interest to you. Many of you may wonder what on earth councillors do to fill in their time at the Castle which is the County office in Winchester so I will give you some indication.

This last year the number of Government directives issued to the County Council reached a staggering total of 2555. That works out at 7 every day including Saturday & Sunday. Each one of these had to be studied, analysed and quite often interpreted and as a result of these directives many of our policies, strategies and methods of operating had to be altered or rewritten.

This is an additional work load and cost over and above the main task of managing the provision of services over the whole of Hampshire, and involves both officers and elected members it also has a major impact on the hundreds of voluntary bodies with whom we work and rely on so heavily. For my own activity position, of the average 35 hours per week I put in to the Council about half of it is spent in Winchester on the main committees such as:

The Full Council meetings.

Vice Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Vice Chairman of the Road Safety Committee.

Member of the Recreation & Heritage Committee.

Member of the Personnel County Employees Committee.

Hampshire Strategic Partnership Committee.

The other half of my time is spent away from Winchester representing the Council on outside bodies such as:

South East Employers’ Federation (London). This deals with pay and conditions for all local government employees in the South of England.

Local Flood Defense Committee (Southampton). This is a Government committee dealing with strategic flood defence matters for the South of England & the Isle of Wight (IoW).

Rural Hampshire Committee (Sparsholt). This Liaises with all the bodies dealing with rural affairs and promotes the rural interests to relevant regional & Government departments

LGA Rural committee (Birmingham, Buxton). This represents the County Rural voice at the LGA meetings, seminars and conferences.

Postwatch Liaison panel (Southampton, IoW). This is a Government panel to watch guard postal services.

Andover Museum Trust (Andover). This is a management committee of the museum which is financed jointly by TVBC & HCC.

Winchester Excavations Committee. This is a voluntary organisation receiving a grant from HCC.

There is one other thing of possible interest, and that is the proposed Government boundary changes to the present County constituencies and the effect this may have on the voting turn out in the next County Council elections. As it is now Abbotts Ann is at the centre of a group of 26 villages forming our/my constituency. Under the new proposals from May/June next year Abbotts Ann & the Clatfords will be taken out of this group and join a new constituency which will make Abbotts Ann the most northern villages of a constituency which includes all the villages down as far as Mottisfont and Michelmersh. The present Councillor for this constituency until the elections next year is Mr Michael Woodall of Romsey.”

10. **Statement by Cllr M Townsend, TVBC.** Cllr Townsend had no formal statement to make and there were no questions put to her.

11. **Report from Abbotts Ann Action Group.** Mr Lucas reported on the activities of the Group over the past year. The group had succeeded in achieving Local Gap status for the Little Park area making planning applications more restrictive and the Group would continue to fight for the Local Gap status at the forthcoming Public Inquiry. Unfortunately, to be represented at the Inquiry, the Group, on behalf of the Parish Council, would have to object to the Local Gap status on some minor technicality!

12 **Reports from the following Parish Organisations:**

a. **Abbotts Ann Primary School Governors.** Mr Stanton presented his report for the past 12 months not only as a Councillor but also as the past Chairman of Governors of Abbotts Ann Primary School:

“On the governing body, we have welcomed a new governor in the form of the Mrs Julia Evans, and say farewell with thanks to the Rev Chris Rankine. As ever, we are grateful for all the governors who give up their time and provide the breath of experience to the governing body for the good and benefit of the school.

I mentioned that I was Chairman of the Governors until recently. Unfortunately I found that work commitments prevented me from giving the school the support I felt it deserves, so I have handed the reins to Dr Chris Wallis, a longstanding member of the board of governors

As regards the school: there are currently 90 children on the roll, and following a recent increase in the Published Admission Numbers, an official intake measure, the school will have a maximum of 105 come September. There are healthy waiting lists in all year groups, which in itself is a measure of the standard of the school, as perceived by those most critical, the parents.

It is often dangerous to judge a school purely on its exam results, however the SATS results this year were excellent, and the School was in the top 50 Primary schools in Hampshire.

Whilst the National Curriculum is obviously high on the schools planning agenda, staff are encouraged to interpret and bring alive the subject matter in a variety of ways. This has led to activities such as:

- A visit to Winchester to take part in a ‘Structures Challenge’.
- A visit to Bramley Frith Environmental Centre.
- A visit to Barton Hall for the senior pupils for adventure training.
- Visits from:
  - The Quantam Theatre for Science.
  - The Tudor Dance Company.

An example of how the staff under Mrs Turnbull are constantly on the lookout for alternative methods of increasing child performance is the adoption of what is called the ‘Brain Gym’. This is a scheme that comes with the recommendation of the Dyslexia Association and participating schools, and is aimed at increasing children’s motivation. We await with interest the feedback from this promising scheme.

I have mentioned Mrs Ann Turnbull, the Headteacher, who without doubt is responsible for the current success of the school. Her working relationship with the governing body has made my time as Chair a lot less arduous than it might have been, and for that I would like to publicly express my personal thanks. Ann’s staff of permanent teachers, part time teachers, assistants, ancillaries, and unpaid helpers must all be recognised for their share in the current success of the school. One of the great strengths of the school is its Christian Ethos, and that is not something that you can buy or import. The Ethos and character of a school is created and built by all those with whom the children come into contact with, and subsequently built on by the children themselves. This I believe, as a parent of two former pupils, is one of the main reasons for the school being as popular as it is.

A very brief word on the school buildings. Those of you present at last year’s meeting will recall that we are looking to improve the school fabric, but preferably relocate the school to a new site. Investigations into this are still ongoing, and we can only move at the pace of the slowest agency we have to deal with in this project. Suffice to say that we are still actively pursuing this improvement to the school, but it will take time. I hope that next year’s report will contain more information of substance in this area.

Finally, as ever, many of the activities mentioned previously have been funded by the Abbots Ann School Association. This band of volunteers work tirelessly to raise funds for the school to enhance the learning experiences for the children. It is fair to say that without their support, the school would be unable to provide the range of activities that they now do.

I have not covered sports events and fund-raising by the children for various good causes around the world. Maybe my successor will be able to brief you on all this next year.”

b. **War Memorial Hall (WMH) Committee.** Mr Lucas reminded the meeting of the important part the Memorial Hall played in the life of the village. He detailed the changes to the WMH Committee and thanked those present for supporting the fund raising events held in the hall. The next WMH sponsored event would be the Pig Roast to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> June.

c. **Sports Field Management Committee.** Mr Emerson gave his report:

Work carried out in the past year included:

Upgrading mower equipment, over £660.  
Pavilion improvements approximately £400 – including replacing cleaning and kitchen equipment.  
Installing five-a-side goals and nets £400.  
Refurbishing the outside toilets to a clean and usable standard - £785  
Electricity, water rates and cleaning £1000.

Fund raising activities over the past year included:

Bonfire Night, raising over £1,177 for the sports field and the same amount for the PTA.  
The Fun Ride raised over £500 for the sports field and £1,000 for the RDA.  
The 'Party in the Park' raised just over £200.  
Donations from the Fete Committee and income from other sources totalled approximately £600.

Future Projects include:

The Fun Ride is planned for Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.  
A 'Party in the Field' will take place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July.  
The showers and electrical wiring in the pavilion require extensive upgrading to meet current regulations – this work is planned and will cost approximately £2,200.  
The installation of a skate boarding facility (Estimate £17,000 +) on the field is being pursued with the village children helping raise funds. (Mrs Wilkins advised the Meeting that all possible 'Grant Routes' were being pursued.) In answer to Cllr Pierce's question of possible future up-grading Mr Emerson stated that the facility was intended for the younger children (5 – 15) of the village, not only to discourage elder children from other villages from using the facilities but also because to generate the interest required for older teenagers would require a much more expensive skateboard ramp, costing in excess of £100K – which is already available in Andover. Following a question from Mr Swann the Meeting was told that the ramp would be positioned at the far side of the Playing Field, as far away from habitation as possible!

As the Chairman of the Sports Field Management Committee Mr Emerson thanked all the members of his Committee for their hard work and time throughout the year and he also thanked Brian Simms, Carol Watts and Fred Thompson for their help. Mrs Murphy, on behalf of all those present, thanked the Committee for their work over the year.

d. **Village Fête Committee.** Ms Dell reported that the Annual Fête was held in the village on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2003 and that the committee and helpers worked very hard to ensure its success. Fine weather on the day helped to raise £5,541. This was a small increase on the 2002 income of £5,374. After expenses the 2003 profit was £4,000 and, adding a carried forward amount of £240, we were able to donate £4,240 to the village.

The Fête AGM was held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2003 and at the AGM the Chairman, Ms Dell, resigned. The vacancy has been published every month in the Parish magazine but to date there have been no inquiries or volunteers to organise the 2004 Fête. Ms Dell has offered to chair the 2004 AGM should there not be a Chairman in place by November 2004.

Mrs Tate has volunteered to organise the Flower Show again, and has been encouraged by promises of support for this event. The show will be open to the public from 2.00 pm until 4.30 pm on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Mrs Tate is also hoping to find volunteers to open their gardens to the public that afternoon. On the 17<sup>th</sup> May there will be a meeting in the WMH at 7.30 p.m., chaired jointly by Ms Dell and Mrs Tate, to discuss the possibility of some stalls and games around the village hall during the Flower Show. It is intended that each stall would be set up and run entirely by the village association organising it. It is also intended that each association keep the funds they raise, with a small levy to cover the cost of hiring the Village Hall, its grounds and any insurance required.

Questions were asked as to why the stalls and games could not be held on the Sports Field as in previous years. Ms Dell answered that without a Chairman of the Fête Committee there was no one to organise such a large undertaking and that the cost of hiring a marquee was prohibitive. To hold another 'Street Party' would also become financially exorbitant as insurance cover was becoming more expensive and difficult to obtain. Mr Griffiths, on behalf of the village thanked Ms Dell and her committee for their work in the past and expressed his wish that someone would come forward to run the Fête.

e. **Abbotts Ann Parochial Council (AAPCC).** Mr Gordon Howard, Churchwarden, offered the following Report on behalf of the AAPCC:

“Whilst St Mary’s continues to be a vital part of our Parish life, expenditure on its fabric is a major headache. Despite our fund raising activities it continues to eat rapidly into our reserves.

**Leak in the Nave Roof.** The collapse of part of the supporting rail of the Crowns on the South side of the nave led to discovery of a leak in the roof on the South East corner of the nave. This was repaired, and pointing and guttering work done whilst the scaffolding was in place, at a cost of some £2,300.

**Quinquennial Repairs.** The minor, non urgent, items from the last inspection were also looked at. The interior ones were done when the scaffolding was erected for the decoration. However, in the light that scaffolding costs of several thousand pounds would be incurred for minor work costing only a few pounds, we have agreed with our architect that exterior wear and tear will have to wait until major work is essential.

**Decoration of the Church.** After the roof repair the decoration of the inside of the church (under consideration for many years) was considered necessary. To our horror, health and safety and other workplace regulations implemented since the previous quote in 1999 meant that the cost has more than doubled, at some £6,800. This work is still ongoing

**Church Boiler.** The installation of a new gas heating boiler was the major expenditure for the year. At a cost of £5,800, including the digging of trenches and installation of

gas and water in the boiler shed, we now have an efficient (and quiet) heating system. The costs to run the heating are not as great as feared at first. We were equating units used to those at home and thought it was exorbitant, but the church has a modern metric meter and costs are just over a third of those calculated!

Sound System Thanks to a very kind donation a sound system, incorporating an induction loop for those with hearing aids and a column speaker for the rest of the congregation, has recently been installed. It has microphones for the Pulpit and Lectern, a radio mike for the person taking the service and an input for a CD player.

**Altar Light.** Thanks to another donation, we also have a light which will light up the altar when anyone enters the church by the West door. It will be switched off for services!

**Closure of the Old Churchyard.** We are still in consultation with the Diocese about formally closing the old part of the churchyard, which has been full for a while, and will come back to this Council when things are any clearer.

All is not doom and gloom. It was nice to see the church full for Christmas and Easter Services. St Mary's and the School work closely together, with a thriving after-school 'Fun Club', our choir and bell ringers are both still active (but would welcome new members), the Pilgrims meet regularly in the village hall and the next concert in church is next Friday.

We are grateful for the continued support of our Parish Council and of many individuals in the Parish in helping St Mary's remain active at the centre of our village life."

13. **Open Question Time.** The Hon Footpaths Officer, the Hon Tree Warden and Mrs Howard, representing the Village Shop Association, were present to answer any questions. Mrs Howard asked whether HCC had taken any action over the encroachment of Penny Path by some properties. Mr Pierce said he would ask the relevant officer to chase up the lawyers responsible. Mrs Howard had no report to make on behalf of the Village Shop Association but reminded those present that the Association AGM was being held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> June and that those interested were invited to attend.

14. **Any Other Business.**

Mrs Murphy asked how long the traffic calming measures in the area of the Jubilee Oak were going to remain. A lively discussion followed. The Chairman stated that the current Traffic Calming Measures around the Jubilee Oak are a trial, initiated by Hampshire County Council (HCC), to try and solve two major problems:

- a. To reduce the speed of traffic entering West Hill from Red Rice Road so that pedestrians and traffic in the vicinity of Dunkirt Lane are not put at risk and,
- b. To prevent over-large traffic from entering West Hill that would otherwise get stuck and cause considerable damage further up the hill.

Some vehicles have been stuck on the West Hill corner for up to 4 hours causing severe disruption to those living there, let alone the possibility of hindering emergency vehicles 'on call'. The fact that heavy vehicles entering West Hill have had to pass 3 signs stating that the 'road ahead' is unsuitable for long vehicles does not prevent them from trying to do so! He went on to remind the Meeting that the present layout is a trial.

There was considerable discussion from the floor as to why the present system was unacceptable. Reasons given included traffic congestion around the area, inability of goods vehicles to unload close to the shop and the temptation for drivers to park on the pavement with the possibility of damaging the pavements themselves and the walls of the listed buildings either side of Red Rice Road. Mr Lucas did suggest that the convenience of tradesmen to deliver to the shop should not over-ride the requirement for safety but, nevertheless, the final solution should be in keeping with the village and not an intrusion of suburban street furniture. Although Mr Swann said he had collected over 180 signatures no one had offered any other suitable solution to the safety and vehicle size problem. Cllr Pierce stated that vehicles can only be banned by weight and height – not length! The fact that no serious accident had been reported at the site did not mean that residents living in the West Hill/ Dunkirt Lane area were not worried about their safety. Mrs Paffett reminded the meeting that large lorries continually caused damage to her, and others', property and that some action to prevent it should be taken.

Mrs Wilkins said that as much of the traffic congestion occurred at the school delivery and collection time and that perhaps those who could walk to the school and shop should do so allowing those who can't some more road space.

The Chairman summed up the discussion by saying that it was clear that feelings against the present trial layout were strong but he asked that they should be addressed formally at a Parish Council Meeting. Suitable alternative measures that directly address the problems should be passed to the Clerk in writing so that they can be considered by the Parish Councillors in plenty of time for the next meeting. He reminded the assembly that Council Meetings were usually held at 7.00 p.m. on the first Thursday of every month in the WMH Jubilee Room and that the exact timings and agenda were advertised in advance on the Parish Notice Boards. Items that villagers wished to have discussed by the Council should be passed to one of the Councillors or the Clerk in good time (*at least 7 days*) so that they could be included in the agenda. Mr Griffiths reminded those present that members of the public are encouraged to attend Parish Council Meetings and that the Meetings rarely exceeded two hours.

15. The Chairman closed the Meeting at 9.15 p.m. and thanked all those present for attending. He especially thanked those who had presented reports and for all those that had contributed to village life over the past year. He finished his closing speech by reminding those present that there was a Litter Picking Day the next morning meeting at the WMH at 10.00 a.m.

Annex A. The Chairman's Report 2004.

Annex B. Abbots Ann Parish Council Accounts for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

Chairman.....

Date.....