

Little Abington



**Review
2008–09**

Little Abington Parish Council Annual Report for 2008–09

Councillors in the Abington Institute Committee Room for the October 2009 meeting



From left:

*Peter Brunning (Chairman), Graham Wigley, Christopher Nutt, John Ellis, Bob Chesham,
(seated) June Waring, Genevieve Dalton (Clerk)
Roslyn Hedge was absent; Bob Chesham joined the council that day.*

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The Council Members 2008–09

<i>Chairman</i>	Peter Brunning	47 Church Lane Tel: 891960	
<i>Councillors</i>	John Ellis	6 Church Lane Tel: 07802 537513	
	Graham Wigley	2 Church Lane Tel: 07824 876594	
	Roslyn Hedge	41 West Field Tel: 893321	
	June Waring	32 West Field Tel: 891752	
	Christopher Nutt	43 Church Lane Tel: 897868	
	Robert Chesham (from October 2009)	1 High Street Tel: 07950 262447	
	Sally Simmons (until July 2009)	29 West Field	
	Dick Molekamp (until June 2008)	19 Bourn Bridge Road	
	<i>Clerk</i>	Genevieve Dalton	27 West Field Tel: 893332 clerk@littleabington.clara.co.uk

The Parish Council represents the parishioners on:

Abington Recreation Ground Committee
Abington Institute Management Committee

The District Councillor who represents Little Abington on South Cambridgeshire District Council is:

Tony Orgee 8 Bourn Bridge Road, Little Abington
Tony.Orgee@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The County Councillor who represents Little Abington on Cambridgeshire County Council is:

Tim Stone 4 Church Lane, Whittlesford, Cambridge CB22 4NX
Timothy.Stone@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Parish Council Meetings 2009–10

Parish Council Meetings are usually held on the fourth Monday of every month (except August and December) in the Abington Institute. Meetings start at 7.15pm. Meeting notices, agendas and draft minutes are displayed on the Parish Council notice-board on the corner of Church Lane and the High Street and also on the Council web-site <http://www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/littleabington>

Monday 22 June 2009

Monday 23 November 2009

Monday 27 July 2009

Monday 25 January 2010

Monday 28 September 2009

Monday 22 February 2010

Monday 26 October 2009

Monday 15 March 2010

Public Participation

All Parish Council meetings are held in public. The first 15 minutes of each meeting is an open forum in which parishioners can raise any topic they wish. The formal meeting starts at 7.15pm. People are welcome at all meetings, but may not participate in discussions except at the Annual Parish Meeting where reports are given of the activities of the Parish Council during the year.

Planning Meetings

Planning applications are dealt with at Parish Council meetings unless the reporting deadline necessitates interim meetings. These meetings are advertised on the Parish Council notice-board. They are usually held at the United Reform Church in the High Street.

Chairman's Report 2008–09

At last year's meeting, we said goodbye to David Soanes, who has moved to Newmarket. We also had extensive discussions about three main topics – the A1307, Hanley Grange Eco-town and the Linton Wind Farm – and commented on allotments and litter.

I was subsequently elected to take over from David and have found it quite a challenging first year, particularly with all these topics to be addressed. I am afraid that none is fully resolved but am pleased to report some progress on all of them. We were delighted to welcome some new councillors during the year: John Ellis early on, followed by Roslyn Hedge and Graham Wigley. We held a training course, jointly with Great Abington and Hildersham, to keep us informed of our duties.

A1307

The very next day after our last meeting there was a fatal accident at the pedestrian refuge and we redoubled our efforts to raise its priority for improvements. These have now been promised this year and we are seeking news on what and when. We have some concerns that traffic on this road will increase further with the anticipated expansion of Haverhill. On the plus side, we have heard that we will get a new cycle path to Sawston this year.

Hanley Grange

The eco-town proposal was withdrawn, as indeed most of them have been. However, Tesco is still keen to push for development through the normal planning process, through EERA's 2009 revision of the regional spatial strategy. We must remain vigilant and continue to make the case against this particular site.

Linton Wind Farm

The planning application has now been submitted and the Parish Council decided our response at a planning meeting after the AGM. Some of you will have heard the arguments at the open meeting on 17th April.

Allotments

An association has been set up to maintain a list of interested parties and manage the allotments in association with the Parish Councils. A site has been chosen along Linton Road in Great Abington and the initial ground preparations have been made.

Litter

Litter continues to be a problem but has been somewhat improved at one of the worst locations by arranging a litter bin at Fourwentways. We have just managed to secure funding for a larger bin, thanks to help from our County Councillor, Tim Stone,

who has also raised the issue of lorry parking at that site. We had an extra litter pick-up there in the autumn and held our annual litter pick-up around both parishes in March – a sure sign of spring as it is timed to coincide with the good weather before the annual growth starts. See the Village Maintenance report on page 11.

Other matters

Aside from these activities, we look after all the regular work, some in conjunction with Great Abington Parish Council. This year we have met to discuss allotments and the programme of bus trips for this year. The two chairmen have also had occasional meetings with John Granger, managing director of Granta Park, our major employer and landowner.

Looking ahead, it's probably time to review the parish plan. Many of the priorities identified by the parishioners five years ago, most notably the Abington Institute, have now been achieved, so it's time to consult again. We would welcome some help in determining some updated targets.

Planning Committee

The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications in the parish and some in the local area although most are determined by the District Council, with the help of their expert team.

The year started with a public meeting on Hanley Grange, with assistance from the Joint Action Group. This group gained the support of almost all the local councils at all three levels. The year ended with the wind farm meeting.

Luckily, it has otherwise been very quiet on the planning front, with only a few mostly minor applications. There has of course been development at Granta Park, with the new Riverside buildings close to Little Abington and in full view of the churchyard. Recently, we have been invited to comment on the detailed plans for three buildings in phase 2 of development at Granta Park.

The other significant planning matter has been the building waste transshipment site at Worsted Lodge on the A11, which is in the extreme northwest of the parish. We were also consulted on the local effect of changes, intended to improve air safety, to the National Air Traffic Control.

Recreation Ground Committee

The committee manages the ground on behalf of the two Parish Councils. Members keep an eye on the condition of the ground and equipment and arrange for maintenance and bin emptying. This year, we continued with the programme of clearance of scrub and overgrown trees. We also hold occasional working parties to make minor repairs.

Thanks are due to Derek Patten who completed the refurbishment of the goal-mouths in the multi-sport area and also made the new bench by the river. We are making arrangements to acquire a replacement container to be sited near the multi-sport area for storage of equipment such as tennis nets.

Many parishioners tidy up the litter and mess caused by the few who abuse the area with litter and criminal damage. We reluctantly decided not to continue to spend money on repairing the youth shelter as it was so frequently vandalised.

Peter Brunning, Chairman, Little Abington Parish Council

Review of Accounts for 2008–09

The Parish Council has ended the year with a balance of £11,437.43. This is £2,008 more than we had planned. We have been able to set aside some reserves for any costs that might be incurred in helping the Allotments Association to set up allotments, for repainting the Millennium footbridge that leads from the footpath in Church Lane over the river onto the recreation ground, and for the Parish Council's contribution if the applications we have made to the County Council for Minor Highways Schemes are successful.

Even though the charge for footway lighting in the village was more than expected and we donated £500 to the Stop Hanley Grange Action Group towards their costs, we spent less than expected. There were savings on the clerk's salary and administration costs, hall hire – with fewer planning applications this year the Planning Committee has not needed to meet – village maintenance and on training for the Clerk and Parish Councillors. Maintenance costs have been kept low thanks to the volunteers who do tasks that we would otherwise ask our contractors to do such as repairing fences, mending the seat in the High Street, cutting back trees, repainting the bus shelter and looking after the garden area on the corner of Church Lane and Church Close. In February following several accidents on slippery pavements in Church Close we bought a grit bin. By the time it was installed the weather had improved but it is there ready for next winter and we hope that one of the local authorities will work with us to keep it topped up.

Looking at income over the last year – once again there were grants from the County Council for roadside grass cutting and for footpath maintenance. The Parish Council has been a victim of the credit crunch. By the end of the year we were earning 0.1% on both our 'high interest' Building Society account and our ordinary bank deposit account.

Looking further back, the Audit Commission gave a satisfactory report on the 2006–07 accounts and the Internal Auditor made some helpful recommendations on financial management.

Now to this year. We agreed the budget in November 2008 and the precept increased to £13,500. This includes an allowance for inflationary increases, loss of income from bank interest, the charge for footway lights, a bigger contribution to bus trips and to add to the reserve for setting up allotments. Looking at what we planned to spend we heard in April 2009 that the Parish Council has been given a grant for one item in the budget – a bigger and better litter bin for the old roundabout at Fourwentways. If it runs to plan the new village maintenance contract will be cheaper; we plan to review our insurance arrangements and we expect to make some savings. These savings may allow the increase in the precept for next year to be kept to a minimum.

Turning now to procedural matters for which I am also responsible. So that we can make sure that the Parish Council is following correct procedures and practices we had a mid-year audit; as required by the Freedom of Information Act, a Publication Scheme was published in December. This sets out the information available on the Parish Council's policies and decision-making and how you can to obtain it. In January we held a joint training session with GAPC and Hildersham PC on the Code of Conduct. We have agreed to adopt a new Power of Wellbeing during the coming year. This should give the Parish Council more flexibility in working with other agencies and using funds more flexibly for the benefit of our residents.

Finally, this has been an exceptionally busy year for me professionally and I would like to thank Peter and all the Parish Councillors for their help over the last year.

Genevieve Dalton
Clerk to Little Abington Parish Council
Responsible Financial Officer

Receipts & Payments for the Year Ended 31st March 2009

	2007-08	2008-09	PLAN
<u>RECEIPTS</u>			
Precept	11,800.00	12,200.00	12,200.00
Footpath grant	350.00	350.00	350.00
Bank interest	392.18	308.39	240.00
Inland Revenue computer rebate	150.00	100.00	50.00
SCDC verge cutting allowance	600.00	615.00	630.00
Gt Abington PC grass maintenance	40.00	80.00	40.00
Footpath upkeep	40.00	40.00	40.00
Gt Abington contribution to bus survey costs	0.00	6.80	0.00
VAT refund	559.99	625.53	425.00
<u>Total Receipts</u>	<u>13,932.17</u>	<u>14,325.72</u>	<u>13,975.00</u>
<u>PAYMENTS</u>			
Clerks' salaries	2,644.39	2,732.72	2,850.00
Contractors -village maintenance	2,143.80	2,380.80	2,600.00
General administration	413.14	300.00	700.00
Insurance	346.79	357.32	375.00
Recreation Ground precept	2,330.00	2,330.00	2,340.00
Institute and room hire	172.50	175.00	215.00
Village and footpaths maintenance	88.00	150.19	550.00
Footway lighting	989.21	1,357.80	1,165.00
Donations	400.00	400.00	600.00
Subscriptions	186.62	190.34	215.00
Section 137	753.59	1,255.62	800.00
Information and publicity	133.15	175.40	200.00
Audit	367.50	291.00	300.00
Capital expenditure	743.00	131.67	0.00
VAT	570.48	482.67	425.00
Training	60.00	90.00	200.00
<u>Total Payments</u>	<u>12,342.17</u>	<u>12,800.53</u>	<u>13,535.00</u>
<u>SUMMARY</u>			
Brought Forward	9,847.43	£11,437.43	10,514.00
Add Receipts	13,932.17	14,325.72	13,975.00
Less Payments	-12,342.17	-12,800.53	-13,535.00
Carried Forward at 31st March 2009	<u>£11,437.43</u>	<u>£12,962.62</u>	<u>£10,954.00</u>
Represented By:-			
Bank Current Account	1,236.82	651.94	
Bank Deposit Account	563.28	573.78	
Building Society Account	9,131.49	11,929.38	
	<u>10,931.59</u>	<u>£13,155.10</u>	
<u>Less</u> cheques drawn	54.15	192.48	
<u>credit due</u>	559.99		
	<u>£11,437.43</u>	<u>£12,962.62</u>	<u>£10,954.00</u>
ALLOCATED RESERVES	<u>850.00</u>	<u>4,110.00</u>	<u>1,350.00</u>
Computer Hardware Fund	850.00	1,050.00	1,050.00
Footbridge repainting	0.00	1,000.00	300.00
Allotment set up	0.00	1,200.00	0.00
Minor Highways schemes		860.00	0.00
Unallocated Reserves	<u>£10,587.43</u>	<u>8,852.62</u>	<u>£9,604.00</u>

Reports from representatives

Police Liaison Report

Local information

The Abingtons enjoy very low levels of crime. The most common offence is possession of cannabis, followed by some anti-social behaviour (ASB), mainly youth-related, but not all. Most ASB centres on the recreation ground and bus stops in Great Abington. Regular patrols by the local Community Support Officers deal with these, usually by moving people on.

The distraction burglaries first reported in the area last year are sadly still occurring; most recently in the spring and summer of 2009. The police visited all the properties involved and supervised the installation of window alarms. Residents are urged to be vigilant, to report anyone suspicious and to check access routes to properties.

Residents will have noticed the placement of large concrete blocks at various points around TWI, following two serious break-ins there. Security has also been improved with new fencing and hedging.

Following residents' reported concerns about parking around the Primary School, the CSOs attended early this year to speak to parents at key times of the day.

The Chairman's report refers to the fatal accident that happened on the A1307 in the village the day after the 2008 AGM. Traffic police continue to patrol the A1307 on a daily basis. The Christmas drink driving campaign and a more recent speeding campaign were very successful.

New initiative

The Sawston sector is keen to help villages set priorities and participate in the local Speedwatch initiative. Full details can be found about this on the Cambridge police website, www.cambs.police.uk.

Community contact

Police surgeries

The CSOs regularly attend the café at the Abington Institute on Saturday mornings. These informal surgeries are an opportunity for residents to discuss their concerns with their local officers. All information remains confidential.

Ecops and Panel Meetings

Panel meetings are attended by representatives of the Parish Council, CCC and SCDC and are open to members of the public. They are very efficiently organised and chaired. They take place quarterly and last about 90 minutes. These meetings are an opportunity to talk directly to officers from the Sawston sector. Policing priorities are set at the meeting, in consultation with local residents.

Remember that if you sign up to Ecops, you will receive regular bulletins (and an entertaining blog from our CSOs). You can also contact the community support officers directly via Ecops: www.cambs-police.co.uk/myneighbourhood/ecops/.

Sally Simmons

Village Maintenance and Footpaths

The Village Maintenance Contract was undertaken by Buchans Landscapes for the year 2008-09. Although their work was generally satisfactory, we experienced difficulties with their reporting which made monitoring difficult. As Buchans had been doing the work for three years the Parish Council felt it was time to test the market and put the contract out to tender. Four quotations were received and consequently a new contractor, CGM, was appointed for the 2009-10, with a review after six months. The opportunity was taken to modify the contract to enable us to have more control over the work that is actually done.

We have been very fortunate in the help that Roy Boughtwood has given in looking after the shrubs around Lady Cambridge's seat on the corner of Church Close and Church Lane and we are indebted to him for continuing to keep the area looking so attractive.

The County Council was consulted regarding the maintenance of the Millennium footbridge but unfortunately the Council did not consider that any repair or maintenance was required. The Parish Council obtained estimates and the footbridge will be repainted in September 2009.

Thanks are due to volunteer working parties, headed by Parish Councillors, who have cleaned, repaired and repainted the High Street bus shelter and laid extra gravel on the village footpaths. The footpaths will be reviewed in the autumn to see if more gravel is required.

An additional litter-pick was carried out by a volunteer working party in autumn 2008 from the Shell garage at Fourwentways up to the A1307. We have been promised funding for a larger litter bin to be installed there but, like all matters financial, progress is slow. The annual litter pick early in April 2009 was organised by Great Abington this year and as usual produced a mountain of rubbish collected from all areas of the villages.

We are very fortunate to live in a pleasant environment with the added benefit of a good community spirit and we hope that everyone will continue to help to maintain the attractive appearance of our village.

June Waring

Abington Institute

The Abington Institute is a well run, well managed facility that is well cared for and imaginatively run by enthusiastic volunteers and enjoyed by many.

There have been two notable improvements to the building this year: new Velux windows in the main hall and considerably reduced water usage. (The previous high consumption was caused by over-enthusiastic flushing in the men's lavatories.)

The cost of running the Institute during 2008–09 was £17,000. The current lease on the computers comes to an end in November 2009, and will not be renewed, saving a further £2,500 next year.

Income this year was £20,000, making a profit or contingency surplus of £3,000. This income was generated by £12,000 of bookings (9% up from last year); £3,500 from the café (21% increase from last year) and £3,000 of donations and fundraising (including £1,030 from the Fun Run).

The Institute is a wonderful facility, far superior to those enjoyed by most other villages of our size, and the venue for a wealth of activities. We should all aim to use it as much as possible.

John Ellis



Protected Road Verges and Naturewatch

The programme for the protection of flora-rich road verges (PRVs) is administered by the Biodiversity Officer of the County Council with the technical support of the Wildlife Trust. On-site care and monitoring of the verges is entrusted to volunteer wardens, and in 2002 I was appointed warden for Little Abington on the recommendation of the Parish Council.

At that time there was only one PRV (No. S36) in the village, a stretch of flat verge and bank on the east side of A1307, to the south of the road to Hildersham. While there is a continuing need to combat shrub overgrowth to protect a fairly interesting community of native chalk-turf flora, the civic value of the site is severely limited by its position on an increasingly busy road.

Shortly after the foundation of Abington Naturewatch in 2004 I suggested that part of the stretch of Bourn Bridge Road which runs between the fields should be designated a PRV. After inspection by the Wildlife Trust this was agreed, both sides of the western end of the road now being posted as PRV S52. Not everything since then has gone smoothly. Mowing regimes have been somewhat erratic, which has made it difficult to assess their effect; by mid-June, no cut had been made in 2009 over the whole area, contrary to all precedent. A plant survey of the PRV was carried out by the Wildlife Trust last June, an agreement that the warden should be alerted, invited and involved having been ignored. The lively correspondence that followed enabled the warden to exercise his powers of invective to some effect – enough for him not to go ahead with the resignation he had in mind.

Nonetheless, for Naturewatch members certainly and I hope for other Little Abingtonians too, PRV S52 has been a success; and there is every hope that this will continue. The verges are easy to come by and walk along, and the display of chalk-loving plants in July and August can be inspiring. In June 2008 we were led by Michael Way on a most useful study walk to identify the grasses on the verges, and were able to record 11 species, several being new additions to our *Flora Abingtonia*, while in July the PRV was a leading supplier of specimens for our Plant Identification session. The plant community is not exceptionally rich or endowed with rare species, but there is admirable diversity, combined with high colour, accessibility and stability. Long may it be so.

Pat Daunt, Coordinator, Abington Naturewatch

District Councillor's Annual Report

Extract from draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27 April 2009

Economic situation. South Cambs District Council will suffer losses in income from its reserves. The government's grant is limited and there is pressure on SCDC's finances. This will affect local communities. Various initiatives to support local businesses have started up.

Audit commission awarded the Council 3 stars for effective use of resources. This is an improvement on 2 stars last year.

Kerbside plastic recycling has started. Recycling rates are increasing in South Cambs. This results in savings on landfill tax.

Housing stock. Tenants will be balloted on the option of establishing a Housing Association. There are financial and practical benefits to this.

Sawston to Abington cycle way. Work to start soon.

A1307. LAPC should be consulted before work starts, possibly in May/June 2009. Cllr Orgee has raised concerns about the impact of developments in Haverhill on traffic volume and road safety.

Hanley Grange. SCDC opposed the proposal for an eco-town at Hanley Grange. There is a discrepancy between local estimates of new housing needs and government figures. If the lower figure is accepted, there will be no need to build a large new settlement at Hanley Grange.

Wind farm near Linton. The key issues are safety on the A1307, choice of a site with little wind, proximity to housing, misuse of public funds for an ill advised scheme due to availability of government subsidies.

County Councillor's Annual Report

Hanley Grange

It's been a busy year. We won the fight against Hanley Grange. The effort was immense with tremendous support for the Joint Action Group of 16 Parish Councils working under the banner of Stop Hanley Grange. By setting up the Joint Action Group we harnessed local parish power in a way that had not been tried before. The Stop Hanley Grange campaign continues as the county and its partners wrestle with where to find space for more development across our area. Tesco have put in a proposal to build 14,100 houses on the site – more than suggested for the eco-town.

I have taken an active part in the process of revising the East of England Plan. The current plan takes us to 2021 and Cambridgeshire is contributing to the review. One of the most important matters is the number of additional houses we shall take above the 75,000 already in the pipeline.

A1307

Thanks to a concerted effort with Tony Orgee and your Parish Council, the County eventually took seriously the dangers on the A1307. It is of great regret that it took a tragedy and some serious accidents for action to be taken. Some improvements have been made and re-design of the pedestrian refuge to make it safer is promised. The two inter-active signs are still not working. I have brought the matter up in full council but there seems to be no urgency after constant nagging for three years.

Cycleway

The County is still working on a cycleway to join Sawston to Little Abington via Babraham. The decision to build it has been taken, the money provided by Granta Park. Efforts continue to acquire the additional land needed.

Windfarm

Although the planning issues around the Linton wind farm are for South Cambridgeshire District Council, the County is a statutory consultee and will be putting forward its views. Like many people, I have severe reservations.

Lorry Parking

Efforts to find somewhere for lorry drivers to park safely are painfully slow. This was brought up again at a recent Area Joint Committee meeting with a most unsatisfactory reply. So there is still untidiness at the Fourwentways roundabout.

Elections

June is the end of this County Council's term of office. I am standing for re-election. It's been a very interesting time as your County Councillor. Little Abington's Quality Parish Council has been very helpful to me and I believe the Council serves you well.

Tim Stone