

## **LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT**

<b>Chair's report</b>	<b>page 2</b>
<b>Clerk's report</b>	<b>page 5</b>
<b>Planning report</b>	<b>page 8</b>
<b>Abington Recreation Ground Committee report</b>	<b>page 9</b>
<b>Abington Village Institute report</b>	<b>page 10</b>
<b>District and county council reports</b>	<b>page 11</b>

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

### **Fourwentways**

The lorry parking is still a problem. We applied through the annual local highways initiative (LHI) funding from South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to have double yellow lines in a number of places to assist with the amount of parking and also with the severe damage to the pathways on Newmarket Road. Thanks to Isobel and Viia for their work on this application. We have been placed quite low on the list so I am not sure we will be successful this time, but another application can be made.

The proposed Med Tech Innovation Centre at the Comfort Café site has not progressed any further due to a slowdown in SCDC's planning programme. However, when this eventually gets the go ahead it will greatly help with the problem.

Since the closure of the school, we wait to hear what will happen to the land. Hopefully there will be a good outcome and this will also help with the problem.

There is still an issue regarding the enforcement of litter picking conditions around the food outlets at FW. We will of course try to keep this issue alive in order to find a solution. This year SCDC supplied us with new litter picking equipment and although we were unable to carry out the annual, organised litter pick due to the lockdown, residents have been using the equipment to arrange their own litter picks and we are most grateful to them.

### **Highways and traffic**

At the start of the lockdown traffic was greatly reduced but recently it is coming back to normal and with it the speeding. We were unable to carry out Speedwatch other than a few weeks in the autumn. Suzanne, who coordinated the team, has now passed on the baton to Paddy Keane who lives in Great Abington and our thanks to him for taking on the role of coordinator.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership/A1307: Approval has now been given for traffic lights at the Hildersham crossroads. This is welcome news as the traffic speeds along this stretch. It is also vital for the success of the proposed Linton Greenway cycle path. GCP plans for the travel hub have finally been completed. The decision was taken for the new park & ride travel hub to be sited at Babraham.

Temporary signs have been placed along Bourne Bridge Road asking pedestrians not to walk on the protected verges. People are walking on the road and the verges are recovering well. Permanent signs for 'Pedestrians in road' have been requested from SCDC.

We are now responsible for taking over funding of the street lights. The clerk has negotiated a three-year contract with EON as the supplier.

### **E-bikes**

This is a Great Abington initiative with funding from the Zero Carbon Communities Grant from SCDC. Peter and Suzanne, with the support of Gill Smith, have coordinated the bookings each week since September 2020 – and to finish in August. The scheme has been a great success with residents borrowing the e-bike more or less throughout the winter. Shortly there is to be a new system and four bikes will be installed on a permanent site.

## **Planning**

At an SCDC planning meeting in February the decision was taken to reject the application for re-development of the Bancroft Farm site. The developers are now putting together an amended proposal and we are still waiting for the detailed drawings.

With the previous Uttlesford Plan rejected, a new planning proposal has been submitted and we will keep residents updated on this project.

In March this year the Greater Cambridge Local Plan issued a 'Call for Sites' survey, to which we responded.

## **Village directory**

A new directory for Great and Little Abington has been delivered to all residents. I am sure everyone will agree it is very useful, most welcome and indicative of the community spirit of the Abingtons. Our grateful thanks to all concerned which must have been quite an undertaking.

## **Broadband scheme**

Inserted in the directory was a flyer regarding the new broadband voucher scheme. To date there has been a good response from the residents of Little Abington and this will be combined with Great Abington to collate all the information. This is still work in progress.

## **Village magazine**

Due to the closure of the in-house printing facility at TWI, the printing of the *Abingtons and Hildersham News* needed to be taken over by the three parish councils. BioMed Realty has agreed to fund the magazine for the first year and discussions are ongoing as to future funding.

## **Website**

The current website covers both parishes and many other groups and the site has grown over time. In line with GDPR (data protection), the site requires updating. This is being discussed and both parish councils are in consultation as to the way forward. Once plans are agreed, residents will be updated with the information.

## **Parish nurse**

We said goodbye to Claire with grateful thanks for all her support over the years. Wishing a warm welcome to our new nurse, Kim Cox, who is looking forward to her new role. I am sure she will be an asset to the village.

## **Coronavirus**

The virus has brought many changes including the formation of Love Abington with a team of volunteers who were invaluable in providing help to residents, including handling prescriptions and much more. The coming together of parish councils, the church, businesses and the community with their support was wonderful

But many things had to be cancelled. The planned celebrations for VE day did not take place but residents took to the streets, drank toasts, waved flags, and thanks to the tuk-tuk driving around the village playing music of the time, it was fun and made the day memorable.

We have all been unable to socialise, the Institute was closed, face-to-face meetings have been banned and we have been introduced to Zoom.

Vaccinations are now progressing very well and let's look forward to a new normal in the coming year.

I have learned much from the last year as Chair of LAPC. Thanks to all the councillors and especially the clerk for their support throughout the year.

**Sheila Bolden**  
**LAPC Chair**

## CLERK'S REPORT

The draft annual accounts for 2021 are set out below. There were no concerns with the audit in 2019–20 and LAPC will be exempt from an external audit this year because income and expenditure are both less than £25,000. Our financial records are subject to internal audit. Although they are always available on request, we expect them to be available for public inspection in July and the final accounts will be published before the end of September, as is legally required.

**The financial balance** at the end of the year was £21,256.36 Last year it was £20,167.37.

**The bulk of our income** is through the annual precept paid by householders via local council tax. LAPC receives grants from Cambridgeshire County Council and the District Council for grass cutting. This year SCDC gave a £100 grant to support the community response to COVID-19.

**Our spend** was £19,178.84.

As usual more than half of our costs are for village maintenance, employing me and a grant to the Recreation Ground Committee. Street lighting in the village is also a significant cost. At the end of 2019 the County Council stopped paying for street lighting and recharging parish councils. The lights are still on! After a shaky start with overcharging, our contract with EON is working well. It may even result in some cost savings in the long term. In April 2020 we let the village maintenance contract to Brookfield Groundcare without any increase in costs. The team are very responsive and the contract is working well.

LAPC has continued to contribute towards community projects including grass cutting in the cemetery, the Parish Nurse and Love Abington. It made donations towards the school holiday club in Abington Woods and Love Abington's Christmas hamper scheme. The three local parish councils contributed to the costs of printing the *Abingtons and Hildersham News* when TWI closed its print room. BioMed Realty has kindly agreed to fund the publication for the coming year. More recently LAPC and GAPC have shared the costs of printing the new Abingtons Directory, listing the many clubs and societies and social activities in the village.

The remaining S106 funds for improving community infrastructure were put towards the cost of refurbishing the Abington institute. We await the promised installation of an HD screen and projector in the meeting room when meetings return to normal.

**Allocated reserves** are £8,965 this year. They include a fund for IT upgrades, £700 for youth initiatives and a growing fund for maintaining the footbridge across the river to the playing fields. There is some funding for highways improvements; some of this might need to go towards the cost of the footpath maintenance. There is also some funding for the cost of a new parish council website that meets statutory requirements including GDPR and Accessibility Standards.

**2021–22.** LAPC agreed a 5% increase in its precept in November 2021.

**Health and wellbeing.** I am LAPC's representative for health and wellbeing. I am a member of the Parish Nurse Management Committee and I have joined the regular SCDC COVID-19 meetings representing LAPC and the Parish Nurse team. During the COVID-19 lockdowns I oversaw and worked with Love Abington to ensure the safe and secure transfer of medication collection from Abington Stores to the Abington Institute.

Finally, I was appointed as clerk in 2003. The role has changed significantly in that time and I plan to retire in 2021–22. I will work with LAPC to support them to plan and appoint a successor and help them to manage a smooth hand over.

**Genevieve Dalton**

**Clerk to LAPC/Responsible Financial Officer April 2021**

Little Abington Parish Council				
DRAFT Receipts & Payments for the Year Ended 31st March 2021				
		YEAR 2019-20	PLAN 2020-21	ACTUAL 2020-21
<b>RECEIPTS</b>				
Precept		17500.00	18025.00	18025.00
GAPC contributions ford, website,		127.56	45.00	45.00
CCC verge cutting allowance		506.44	500.00	506.44
SCDC verge cutting allowance		250.00	250.00	0.00
VAT refund		1693.99	0.00	1288.14
Footpath upkeep		60.00	60.00	60.00
Speedwatch		120.00	0.00	0.00
Bank interest		37.70	5.00	21.25
Grants/other income		229.60	0.00	144.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>£20,525.29</b>	<b>£18,885.00</b>	<b>20089.83</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Clerk costs inc salary		4634.59	4600.00	4511.86
Recreation Ground precept		2756.00	2756.00	2756.00
Contractors -village maintenance		5145.96	5200.00	5100.00
Footwaylighting power costs		2130.07	2500.00	1376.80
VAT		1879.57	0.00	1085.62
GPC /Donations		2360.00	3750.00	1633.00
Insurance		390.06	410.00	403.66
Audit		200.00	200.00	200.00
General administration/election		325.55	200.00	545.75
Information and publicity/public engagement		0.00	245.00	649.20
Subscriptions		331.76	390.00	344.29
Institute and room hire		180.00	240.00	139.66
Village and footpaths maintenance		326.81	900.00	70.00
Training		381.72	400.00	30.00
misc staff costs		103.80	150.00	0.00
capital items		3742.55	0.00	333.00
<b>Total Payments</b>		<b>£ 24,888.44</b>	<b>£ 21,941.00</b>	<b>19178.84</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>				
Brought Forward		£24,531.52		£20,345.37
Add Receipts		£20,525.29		£20,089.83
Less Payments		£24,888.44		£19,178.84
<b>Carried Forward at 31st March</b>		<b>£20,168.37</b>		<b>£21,256.36</b>
Represented By:-	Bank Current Account	£5,228.61		£6,118.35
	Cambridge Building	£15,116.76		£15,138.01
		<b>£20,345.37</b>		<b>£21,256.36</b>
	plus credit due	£44.00		
	Less cheques drawn	£221.00		
		<b>£ 20,168.37</b>		<b>£ 21,256.36</b>
<b>ALLOCATED RESERVES</b>				
Youth club / youth initiatives		£800.00		£700.00
Computer Hardware Fund		£149.75		£199.75
Footbridge repainting/maintenance		£3,200.00		£4,000.00
Parish Plan		£800.00		£0.00
S106		£333.08		£0.00
Village speed reduction		£176.00		£176.00
Document management /GDPR		£2,390.00		£2,390.00
Minor Highways schemes		£1,007.45		£1,500.00
<b>Total Allocated Res erves</b>		<b>£8,856.28</b>		<b>£8,965.75</b>
<b>Unallocated Reserves</b>		<b>£11,312.09</b>		<b>£12,290.61</b>
	of precept	65%		68%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£20,168.37</b>		<b>£21,256.36</b>

## **PLANNING REPORT**

### **Planning application and decisions**

**Bancroft Farm (S/3921/19/FL):** The main application for our consideration has for the second year been Bancroft Farm, the cluster of detached houses and conversion of two barns into offices on Church Lane. This report includes the history of the application.

Following an informal meeting with Cheffins in February 2019 the first application was submitted in April 2020; several objections from neighbours were received. LAPC recommended refusal on numerous grounds including infringement of the PVAA (Protected Village Amenity Area), undesirable layout and possible dangerous parking on Church Lane related to the office development. The application was resubmitted in December with significant changes, including the size and design of the properties. LAPC recommended refusal again on similar grounds as before.

A third submission was reviewed in April 2020. The boundary had been moved to encroach less on the PVAA. Refusal was again recommended. A fourth submission was reviewed in October 2020 – design alterations and re-siting of plots 1 and 2. The site still encroached on a PVAA, and with other concerns we recommended refusal. Further amendments were submitted in December 2020, mainly relating to the carport design. We recommended refusal as the carports are too narrow to be used conveniently, potentially causing on-street parking on Church Lane.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) committee met in February 2021 and agreed 7 votes to 4 to refuse the application for two reasons: PVAA encroachment/impact and character/heritage impact.

We held an informal meeting with Cheffins on 21 April 2021 to discuss a sixth submission. The site no longer encroaches on the PVAA and the office accommodation has been reduced to the conversion of one barn.

### **Other planning applications**

A number of properties on West Field have applied for extensions (9, 39 and 15). We have recommended approval and GCSP has agreed. Other extensions/alterations at 30A Church Lane and 15 Cambridge Road were agreed by both LAPC and GCSP.

We approved an extension to the Worsted Lodge site (a county application).

The planning application for a new cycle track (pump track) on the recreation ground has been approved.

### **Greater Cambridge Local Plan process**

In February 2021 we made detailed comments to the eight submissions that made up the 'call for sites' for Little Abington, covering accessibility, transport links, flooding, pollution, heritage and green infrastructure.

**Suzanne Pattinson**  
**Planning lead**



## **ABINGTON RECREATION GROUND COMMITTEE REPORT**

The committee manages the ground on behalf of the two Abington parish councils. Members monitor the condition of the ground and equipment and arrange for bin emptying, maintenance and minor repairs.

There are representatives from both parish councils and from the users – football and cricket clubs. We have additional representatives for children’s play equipment and as required for other projects. This year the committee has remained fairly stable, with Peter Brunning, Richard Allum and Richard Smith from Little Abington, and Louise Patten, who has been joined by Jill Carter and Stephen McDonnell from Great Abington. We will, as usual, review our representatives at the parish council AGMs at the start of the May parish council meetings. Dennis Tiplady, David Pimblett and Charlotte Adam represent the users. Alan Cooke provides a link with the school governors and is involved with the proposed pump track.

The grass, both the football pitch and the play area, is cut by the cricket club and is looking good. Last winter, it was partly flooded from time to time, so is still quite soft.

We arrange an annual inspection of the ground, focused mostly on the play and fitness equipment. These, together with the MUGA, have been closed some of the year in line with changing government guidance for handling the coronavirus pandemic. We have made some simple repairs, including the MUGA entrance gate, which was vandalised. We held a clean-up of the play area before re-opening after the first lockdown and installed bird-spikes on the swings to deter birds causing fouling. We await some good dry weather to sand down the swing frames.

We have explained closures on the new notice board and would be grateful if users could note the guidelines, which are mostly to ensure their safety. There is information on how to report any problems.

After a lengthy pause, partly due to the virus, we have made progress on the design of the proposed pump track. We have obtained planning permission and a grant from British Cycling. We hope to be able to arrange construction in the late summer.

We have also started to investigate refurbishment and possibly extension of the MUGA.

Thanks are due to volunteers from the committee who empty the litter bins. It would be much appreciated if dog owners could use the dog bins when appropriate, as these are emptied by a specialist contractor. It would also be very helpful if people could take their rubbish home if the bins are full, which can occasionally happen after major events such as sports day.

Please note:

- The ground is bordered to the north by a river, which is occasionally deep and fast-flowing, so children should always be supervised. We saw some high levels and flows during the winter.
- The fitness equipment is not suitable for unsupervised use by small children. There is a notice stating that it is not for children under 12.

**Peter Brunning**  
**Chairman, Abington Recreation Ground Committee**

## **ABINGTON VILLAGE INSTITUTE REPORT**

This year's report is like no other in the history of the Institute. In the last month of the year 2019–20 the Institute closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has not really been able to reopen since then.

Through the first wave of the pandemic there were only two activities at the Institute. Prescription distribution sessions were run three afternoons a week from April to August, and the meeting room was taken over as a temporary foodbank. All the usual activities – café, lunches, film night – were cancelled, as were all the regular user group sessions and private bookings.

After the first wave of the pandemic things began to look hopeful and plans were being made to reopen. Yoga even began some sessions but then the second wave hit, and we were back in the same position.

In September the school began to use the Institute Main Hall for some PE sessions and some music lessons were able to resume, but nothing else. As the year 2020–21 draws to a close, we are beginning to plan to resume activities, albeit based on a new normal. This could have been a very testing time for the Institute financially. Whilst it has been mostly closed there have been some savings, but there have been significant ongoing costs. Items like insurance and alarm systems have had to be continued. Basic heating has been maintained to keep the building in good order. Cleaning has continued and, in some aspects, has even been stepped up.

During the year the management applied for and was fortunate to receive support from the Business Continuity Grant system set up by the Government. This was in four different tranches and amounted to just under £20,000 in total. It is hoped that these grants will be close to covering the deficit incurred because of the pandemic.

Looking forward, we hope that Section 106 funds will eventually become available to carry out the much-needed work on the external walling of the terrace. Using the money on this work is a slight variation to the original S106 agreement and it has required the involvement of a solicitor to get the formal agreement altered. We also have plans to upgrade the meeting room facilities with the installation of electronic screens to facilitate parish council and other meetings.

As always, the Institute relies on its volunteers. We know we will need to recruit new volunteers to help in areas like the café, as well as behind the scenes on administration and other crucial aspects. New faces and old hands working together as we move forward into a new, brighter year.

**Richard Smith**

## **DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORTS**

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

#### **COVID-19**

The key issue this year is, sadly, the same as we reported last year: COVID-19 and all that entails. We would have hoped to be in a changed world by now.

SCDC has been at the heart of providing support for our communities and businesses. All the funding that the government has been pumping into the local economy has been managed and distributed by the council. To give some idea of the scope of this work since November, the latest round of grants, some £10,570,066, has been distributed to 4,447 local businesses. In addition, £3,550,204 has been given out in Hardship Grants.

SCDC has been providing support and funding to our local community groups that have been doing such sterling work providing practical assistance to those who need it, and who continue to provide this invaluable service. A big thank you to them.

Let's hope that the world will be very different by next year's meeting and we can put this all behind us.

#### **Housing development**

LAPC has been diligent in working for the village in protecting us from unwanted developments through their very professional and detailed responses to the District Council Planning Authority. There are more threats on the horizon as sites are promoted locally as part of the Local Plan process.

### **Cambridgeshire County Council**

#### **Shire Hall**

Cambs County Council took a decision last year to leave their Cambridge city centre office, Shire Hall, for a new-build facility at Alconbury – the other end of the A14 from us. This caused some local consternation, not least from the staff, some of which aren't keen on the move. Whatever your views on it, the decision has been made and the move confirmed. The update this year is that Shire Hall has now been sold to another party and will be vacated by the county council this year in 2021.

#### **A1307**

The big news over the last few years, from the Highways department, is that the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), which is formed of the local Cambridgeshire councils plus the university and a few other bodies, has been implementing upgrades to the main road in our area, the A1307. There have been, many, local meetings over the years where people's views on various proposals have been put forward and, to the credit of the GCP, some of the views have been considered and implemented.

The upgrades that we have seen so far, from the GCP funding, have been:

- Upgrades to the traffic lights at LVC to make them 'smarter'.
- Installing a bus lane on the dual carriageway on the western approach to Linton.
- Upgrading the foot/cycle path between Linton and Hildersham.

The upgrades that we can expect to see next are:

- Average speed cameras installed between Haverhill and Linton.
- A pedestrian crossing at the Hildersham junction.
- A 'greenway' off-road non-motorised user path between Abington and Linton.
- A new roundabout at the Bartlow Road junction at Linton.
- Remodelling of the Dean Road junction, where a lot of fatalities occur.

The detail of most of these changes are still to be finalised, so please do make your opinions heard either directly through the GCP local liaison meetings, or via your parish, district or county councillors.

**John and Henry Batchelor**  
**District and county councillors**