

LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017-2018

This year has seen further changes on the Parish Council. We were very sorry to lose Dennis Lightning, due to his untimely death. He had not been on the Parish Council very long but had made a significant contribution on village maintenance and the Recreation Ground Committee.

The local elections will be held on 3rd May, but all Parish Councillors have been elected unopposed, with the exception of Kate Scoffings, who has been ill and decided not to stand for another term of office. We therefore start the new council year with a vacancy.

Highways

This topic is mentioned at most of our meetings, and we are working on various initiatives to achieve improvements locally.

The most high profile project is the *Cambridge South East Transport Study*, run by the *Greater Cambridge Partnership (formerly City Deal)*. This focuses on the A1307 between Haverhill and Cambridge. The Parish Council has participated in a local liaison forum, which worked with the consultants designing improvements. The resulting schemes were the subject of public consultation early this year, and further work is ongoing. One aspect still to be determined is a likely Park & Ride close to Abington.

We continue to press for a more strategic view of the highways network around Cambridge, including the trunk roads, noting the volume of development just outside the Greater Cambridge area. One such proposed development is the AgriTech development near Hinxton, which was turned down partly because of the lack of infrastructure to support it, with an adverse effect on the A1301/A505.

We continue to get regular – and entirely justifiable – complaints about Four Went Ways, where the old roundabout serves as an unofficial lorry park. We have been in recent communication with highways, planning and others to see what can be done. We understand that lorry drivers do have to stop and that facilities in this area are sparse. However, this does not really excuse the dreadful state of the area; we believe that the businesses who benefit from the trade could and should do more to prevent or remove the mess.

On a smaller scale, we once again sought support for a *Local Highway Improvement* to improve safety in the busy centre of the village. A survey of parents of children at the village school showed that most were keen to see improvements, notably for safer crossing the road outside the school. Sadly, we were once again unsuccessful, as there are many such small initiatives competing for resources; must try to make a more compelling argument next year.

Road flooding can also be a problem. The occasional floods near the church seem to be much reduced by getting a ditch cleared at Bancroft Park. Some similar issues are less easy to fix.

We regularly report minor highways issues such as potholes; you can also make reports on https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/xfp/scripts/xforms_form.aspx?formID=25&language=en

We have recently re-started our *Speedwatch* campaign on Bourn Bridge Road, High Street and Cambridge Road. Most, but not all, drivers behave quite well in the village, but speeding is common on Cambridge Road. We pass details of speeding vehicles to the police. We would welcome further volunteers, so we can increase our coverage.

CLERK'S REPORT 2017-18

The financial balance at the end of the year was just under £24,000 compared to £20,000 last financial year. This includes funds set aside (our allocated reserves) of almost £10,000 for traffic and road safety improvement measures, youth initiatives, rationalisation and electronic archiving of the vast number of documents held by the Parish Council as well as preparation for the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that come into effect in May. There are still some S106 funds (£1087) intended to improve community facilities. Requests from the Institute Management Committee and the Recreation Ground Committee are awaited.

Expenditure was close to plan. As usual more than half of the Parish Council's costs are for employing the Clerk, village maintenance and a grant to the Recreation Ground Committee. LAPC has continued to contribute towards the cost of community projects including the Parish Nurse and the Bobby Scheme for victims of crime. We have not been invoiced for the costs of footway lighting this year. One unexpected cost was for repairs to the bus shelter on the Linton side of Cambridge Road. This was partially offset by a successful insurance claim.

Although the audit regime has changed, the accounts and governance /risk management processes are still subject to external review through an audit process similar to the previous arrangements with the Audit Commission. The annual return will be submitted in June. The draft accounts were agreed by the Parish Council this evening. Last year we received an unqualified audit.

In the coming year there will be some income from sharing the Speedwatch equipment with Ickleton Parish Council. We will be market testing for insurance and for village maintenance. The Parish Council has worked with CGM for some years now and I know that some residents have been unhappy with maintenance. There may be opportunities to work with a different contractor or to consider a different approach that provides more opportunity for local input.

The Parish Council's precept for 2018-19, which is paid by householders through Council Tax, has risen to nearly £17,000 which is about £65.00 a year for a band D property. We hold a significant level of reserves that had not been earmarked for specific priorities. Although some needs to be held for contingencies, it could be used on local projects to benefit the community. Suggestions from residents on priorities would be welcome.

NOTE: The final accounts agreed with the Internal Auditor are on the following page

Genevieve Dalton

Clerk to Little Abington Parish Council/Responsible Financial Officer

Little Abington Parish Council

Receipts & Payments for the Year Ended 31st March 2018

		YR 2016-17	YR 2017-18	PLAN 2017-18	
RECEIPTS					
Precept		£ 16,490.00	£ 16,820.00	£ 16,820.00	
GAPC contributions		£ -	£ 90.00	£ 45.00	
CCC verge cutting allowance		£ 506.44	£ 506.44	£ 506.00	
VAT refund		£ 2,036.86	£ 1,142.72		
Footpath upkeep		£ 60.00	£ 60.00	£ 60.00	
Bank interest		£ 12.55	£ 7.53	£ 5.00	
Grants/other income		£ 146.62	£ 861.92	£ -	
Total Receipts		£19,252.47	£19,488.61	£17,436.00	
PAYMENTS					
Clerk costs inc salary		£ 3,692.40	£ 4,069.57	£ 3,832.00	
Recreation Ground precept		£ 2,625.00	£ 2,625.00	£ 2,678.00	
Contractors -village maintenance		£ 3,345.93	£ 2,792.38	£ 3,644.00	
Footway lighting power costs		£ 1,922.13	£ -	£ 1,198.00	
VAT		£ 849.72	£ 1,114.43	£ -	
Donations		£ 1,050.00	£ 650.00	£ 650.00	
GPC		£ 1,213.73	£ 665.20	£ 1,250.00	
Insurance		£ 310.19	£ 334.43	£ 326.00	
Audit		£ 232.00	£ 238.00	£ 265.00	
General administration		£ 50.00	£ 335.82	£ 75.00	
Information and publicity		£ 175.00	£ 33.59	£ 75.00	
Subscriptions		£ 269.04	£ 249.78	£ 299.00	
Institute and room hire		£ 264.00	£ 197.00	£ 240.00	
Village and footpaths maintenance		£ 100.00	£ 1,150.53	£ 1,150.00	
Training		£ 30.00	£ 215.00	£ 200.00	
capital items		£ 1,818.00	£ 1,206.92	£ -	
Total Payments		£ 17,947.14	£ 15,877.65	£ 15,882.00	
SUMMARY					
Brought Forward		£18,990.31	£20,295.64		
Add Receipts		£19,252.47	£19,488.61		
Less Payments		£17,947.14	£15,877.65		
Carried Forward at 31st March		£20,295.64	£23,906.60		
Represented By:-	Bank Current Account	£5,583.61	£ 8,845.30		
	Cambridge Building Society	£15,053.77	£ 15,061.30		
		£20,637.38	£23,906.60		
	<u>plus</u> credit due	£0.00			
	<u>Less</u> cheques drawn	£341.74			
		£ 20,295.64	£ 23,906.60		
ALLOCATED RESERVES				NOTES	
Youth club / youth initiatives		£ 600.00	£ 700.00	fund building	
Computer Hardware Fund		£ 71.71	£ 49.75		
Footbridge repainting		£ 800.00	£ 1,600.00	fund building	
Insurance excess		£ 250.00	£ -		
S106		£ 1,087.08	£ 1,087.08		
Village speed reduction		£ 100.00	£ 100.00	speedwatch signs ordered £176.00	
Speed/village Signage		£ 750.00	£ 750.00		
Document management project		£ 3,000.00	£ 2,606.00		
Minor Highways schemes		£ 1,500.00	£ 3,000.00	16-17 scheme not invoiced. 17-18 bid unsuccessful	
Total Allocated Reserves		£8,158.79	£9,892.83		
Unallocated Reserves		£12,136.85	£14,013.77		
	of precept	74%	83%		

ABINGTON VILLAGE INSTITUTE REPORT

It has been another successful year with good use being made of the facilities by Village groups and private bookings. A new addition this year has been the regular table tennis group on a Tuesday evening.

The Institute's fantastic facilities have allowed the Film Nights, Abington Lunches and the Café to be as busy as ever.

The new boiler installed last year coupled with the intelligent heating controls finished this year have enabled user groups to be better serviced.

Remedial work has been carried out on the terrace facia. A more fundamental rebuild of that part of the building is now being considered. Replacement flooring, curtains and blinds around the building as well as upgrading the lighting in the main hall are all in the medium-term plan.

Meeting room facilities should be improved soon with the installation of big screens to facilitate PC meetings and other users.

As ever the list of the volunteers over the last year is long. Much voluntary effort is put in behind the scenes on administration, running repairs and maintenance working parties. We all owe a vote of thanks to the many volunteers who make this facility something we can all be proud of.

John Ellis

Institute Management Committee LAPC Rep.



COMMITTEE for ABINGTON HOUSING

Three sites at Pampisford Road, Linton Road and Church Lane were originally identified in 2012 and put forward to South Cambridgeshire District Council. Initial concerns about too many houses being built too quickly have not been realised.

Moorefield, the first of the three sites to go ahead is now partially occupied and the affordable units have been offered. Linton Road is expected to be the second development. Agreement was reached with West Lodge Kennels. It has been approved, the archaeological survey carried out and building work is likely to commence when Moorefield is finished.

Proposals for Bancroft Farm in Little Abington appear to have stalled over density.

Other housing development is now expected to proceed at Strawberry Farm, Pampisford Road and on land North of Linton Road. The Neighbourhood Plan for the former LSA is also likely to bring forward some housing development.

Bernie Talbot

Chairman, Committee for Abington Housing

REPORT BY DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

The examination in public into the Draft South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and the Draft Cambridge City Local Plan has taken far longer than expected, but it must be remembered that this is a simultaneous examination into **two** separate plans.

The process is now near its end – in the Autumn of 2017 the inspectors asked that consultation be carried out on the Main Modifications that they consider necessary for the two Local Plans to be found ‘sound’ (and can therefore be approved).

The Main Modifications ‘do not change the broad strategy for development included in the Local Plans or the main locations for where this development will be delivered.’ So major development will take place in new settlements and extensions to larger villages – Northstowe, Waterbeach, Bourn airfield and expansion of Cambourne.

The terminology ‘Main Modifications’ may imply something greater than is actually required: in many cases the modifications involve relatively small and simple changes in wording.’

Greater Cambridge Partnership and the A1307 corridor

The Greater Cambridge City Deal between national government and the County, City and District councils was agreed in 2014. It gave local councils a grant of £100 million for the period 2014 – 19 to address congestion and transport infrastructure issues in the Greater Cambridge area (that is, the area covered by Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District).

Because potential schemes take some time to be developed, consulted upon, put out to tender and then implemented, it was recognised that major schemes would be unlikely to be completed, by the end of 2019.

Under the arrangement further tranches of £200 million for 2019-24 and £200 million for 2024-29 will be given to the local area provided recognisable progress is made in the period up to 2019.

An early decision was made to allocate just under £40 million to the A1307 Cambridge Biomedical Campus – Haverhill corridor.

A Local Liaison Forum (LLF) for this corridor was set up in early 2017 with myself as Chair.

Following a series of workshops where well over 40 different proposals (put forward by consultants and members of the LLF) were considered, a series of proposed improvements (Phase 1) along the A1307 were developed together with three alternative strategies for the section between the Cambridge Biomedical campus and Four Wentways.

22,000 12-page leaflets setting out all the proposals were delivered to residents and businesses along or adjacent to the route. A public consultation on these proposals was held from 9 February to 9 April, 2018, and responses will be reported to the Greater Cambridge Partnership’s Executive Board in early Summer, leading to decisions on what elements of the proposals to take forward. Depending on which strategy is taken forward,

the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Board may have to allocate additional funding to the area.

I did respond as a local member to the consultation, welcoming many of the Phase 1 proposals but opposing ideas such as banning right turns from Linton High Street onto the A1307 – likely, in my view, to simply lead to greatly increased traffic on the Back Road (a completely unsuitable narrow road) and hence more traffic attempting to get onto the A1307 at the Little Abington Hildersham Road junction.

The consultation proposals also, in my view, contained some serious omissions – for example, there were no safety measures at the Babraham crossroads and no direct cycle access to Granta Park.

I also supported the views of Little Abington Parish Council regarding its concerns about traffic and traffic speeds on Cambridge Road.

Housing and Neighbourhood planning

Construction of houses at the High Street/Pampisford Road site in Great Abington are well advanced.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that SCDC is taking possession of the keys of 5 of the new homes (4 rented and 1 fixed equity) on the High Street / Pampisford Road site this week. The rented properties are being allocated and new tenants are expected to be moving in in early May.

The remaining rented properties are almost completed and I understand that they too will be handed over to the District Council shortly.

Construction work on the Linton Road site will soon begin, and, when completed, will provide another 18 affordable dwellings. I have supported these dwellings being taken over by the District Council.

Affordable dwellings on these two sites (High Street/Pampisford Road and Linton Road) will be offered first to people who are already resident in Great Abington or Little Abington and those having a connection with either of our villages (for example, having family living in one or other of the villages).

The District Council continues its work improving its housing stock, fitting internal and external insulation and solar panels, so residents can benefit from reduced energy consumption and costs. Council house tenants have also benefitted in recent years from a yearly 1% **reduction** in house rents. The average district-wide council house rent is now just over £400 per month.

Since 2010 the District Council has been able to spend more money on its council housing; for years up to 2010, the council had to hand over more than 50% of its council house rent income to national government as part of what was called a 'negative council house subsidy.' In 2009, the council had to hand over well in excess of £12 million out of a total council house rent income of £24 million. This does not happen now, and that is how the Council has been able to start building council houses again itself (its largest house building programme for over 30 years) and to take on responsibility for the affordable houses on the High Street/Pampisford Road and Linton Road sites.

The Neighbourhood Plan for the former Land Settlement Association area of Great Abington is well advanced and may well be the first such plan to be agreed locally, and hence adopted into planning policy.

Church Close, Little Abington

Repairs to the road surface in Church Close were carried out by the District Council in 2016. This road is the responsibility of the District Council because it has not been adopted by the local highways authority (in this case, the County Council). In recent months the road surface has deteriorated significantly and I have requested urgent action to repair the road. Repairs cannot be carried out in cold weather but now that warmer weather is with us, repairs should be carried out very soon.

A District Council surveyor has visited Church Close and fully agrees that Church Close is in urgent need of works. He has raised an order to fill the potholes as soon as possible as a temporary repair to remove the hazards. At the same time the District Council is putting together a resurfacing package for a contractor to resurface the road as a more permanent solution.

District Council Budget

The District Council set its budget at its February meeting. The Council has faced considerable financial pressures in recent years, and this pressure was reflected in the budget decision.

There are three sources of funding to the Council, namely, Council Tax; Business Rates and income from interest and commercial activity.

The Council has sought to provide more cost effective services – for example through joint working with other authorities.

The shared waste and recycling collection service between the District Council and Cambridge City Council consistently achieves an over 99.5% collection rate and achieved a 100% collection service in the recent very bad and cold weather

Creating better collection routes for waste and recycling collections across the two local authorities has led to a reduction of about 20,000 miles travelled per year by the collection vehicles and will give savings of about £700,000 over three years.

Net Portfolio Holder expenditure from the current year of £17.5m will increase to £19.2m in 2018/19. This increase is due to a number of factors including inflation; salary increments and additional requirements placed on the Council – examples include:

- national government's Reducing Homelessness Bill will be implemented in 2018 and additional staff are being taken on to provide the greater level of support needed.
- £55k is allocated for the green energy fund and £200k for the green energy loan scheme.
- The Capital Programme includes provision of £160k in 2018/19 for street sweepers.

At the District Council's budget-setting meeting it was proposed to increase the Council Tax for a band D property by £5 and proportionately for other council tax bands, which is a rise of 3.7%. This was approved by 31 votes to 2 with 11 abstentions.

To set matters in context, a 1% increase in the District Council's portion of council tax raises an additional £70,000 per year whereas a 1% increase in the County Council's portion of council tax raises over £2.4 million a year.

Shared services

As a way of working more efficiently, South Cambridgeshire District Council has joined with Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridge City Council to share certain services in order to reduce costs. For example, small district councils simply cannot afford to employ a wide range of legal officers and when specific expertise is required, have to buy in those services from specialist companies. By sharing legal services across three councils, the shared service can afford to employ specialists in all areas of the councils' work and so avoid the high costs of buying in specialist advice.

Planning Enforcement

District Council officers continue to monitor and, where appropriate, carry out enforcement action at sites in Little Abington and other villages. In some cases, resolving matters takes a considerable length of time with court hearings, adjournments, appeals and further court hearings. Recently the District Council was awarded £7,000 court costs in relation to a local case.

Tony Orgee

ANNUAL DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT (RECEIVED MAY 2018)

ALL CHANGE AT SOUTH CAMBS

The big story is undoubtedly the District Council election this month. There has been a completed change of party leadership with the Liberal Democrats taking over all control for the first time in the history of South Cambs.

The new council will be:

Liberal Democrats:	30
Conservatives;	11
Labour:	2
Independents:	2

REST OF THE YEAR

The big ongoing issue has been the Local Plan that has been under review by a government inspector for well over four years. Without the plan in place this has opened the door to

developers to build housing in areas around our villages which would not normally be allowed. Over the whole district this has amounted to nearly 6,000 unplanned houses. Linton has seen around 100 houses approved at appeal whilst The Abington's and Castle Camps have seen significant approvals.

We understand that the Inspector will finish her work on the Local Plan around June or July. Once it is back in place the villages will be protected again.

We have better news on the A1307 where the Greater Cambridge Partnership is proposing to invest at least £39 Million in safety and public transport improvements to the road. This will include a roundabout at the Bartlow Crossroads at Linton as well as speed reductions, improved traffic lights systems, and bus priority measures. We are expecting to hear the results of the recent consultation process in the next few weeks, see a revised plan and hope to hear that work will start on the Haverhill to A11 section this summer.

Children's Centres

The County took the decision last year to 're-designate' some of Cambridgeshire's Children's centres, which means that the County Council owned buildings that have Children's Centres in them will no longer be classed as such. We have one in Linton and this was one of the centres that was earmarked for re-designation. They are having some issues with the Trust that run the building however, as the County Council have the Children's Centre on a long-term lease, which they are struggling to get out of. They are still working through this however, so will eventually not be there.

The plan from the County Council is to offer the same services remotely via outreach programmes. Our concerns are that the transition won't be as smooth as planned and some people will be left in limbo without any support that they are entitled to.

Park & Ride Charges

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (City Deal) has agreed to take on the charge for parking at Cambridge's Park & Ride sites. This includes the annoying electronic system for actually parking the car as well as the charge. The charge for the actual bus remains however, but the charge and the system for the car park have been removed.