

LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report for the year April 2015 to March 2016

Reports presented at the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25 April 2016

1. Chairman's Report 2015-2016

I would like to thank all the Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk for their all their hard work this year, which seems to have been quite busy but with progress on a number of fronts. In particular, the Clerk (with help from Mr Ellis) has started to put Parish Council papers on the village website.

Last year, we reported that the Bourn Bridge Road fields are owned the Cambridge International School (CIS), the Perse School and Dr Adrian Izzard. It's pleasing to see the playing fields in use and the Perse pavilion complete. We are still very concerned about the traffic generated by the CIS and also by lorry parking at Four Went Ways and have been in discussion with the appropriate people.

We understand that the CIS and Holme Court School have changed hands and are now separate from "Abington Woods" (the former Scout County Camp site). We have invited the CIS to attend our April meeting to give us an update on their plans, in particular for better managing their traffic.

The Millennium footbridge on the Public Right of Way from Church Lane to the Recreation Ground was repainted over the summer.

We agreed to support the Parish Nurse project. The defibrillator is now outside the Abington Institute for public use in the event of a cardiac arrest. Several training courses, open to all, have been held to explain its use in conjunction with Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) chest compression.

2. Clerk's Report

The Parish Council has ended the year with a balance of just under £20,000 compared to £21,000 last year although there is an invoice due for almost £1,000 for the cost of street lighting. The year-end balance includes money set aside for projects such as highways improvement and youth initiatives. There are still some funds available from S106 intended to improve community facilities. About half of it was spent on Little Abington's contribution to the cost of the new shelter on the recreation ground

As usual a significant proportion of the Parish Council's costs are for employing the Clerk, village maintenance and our contribution towards the cost of the Recreation Ground.

The Millennium Bridge has been repainted at a cost of £3,500 and we plan to build up a fund to cover the costs of repainting in about five years time. Rather than relying on the loan of equipment from Cambridgeshire Police the Parish Council bought its own Speedwatch equipment and a community led scheme was established about six months ago. (See the Speedwatch report which is an appendix to this Annual Report).

The Parish Council continues to support the community in a variety of ways. It has helped the GAPS out-of-school club to buy some new equipment, the Parochial Church Council to maintain Little Abington churchyard and to improve the cemetery fence and it agreed to contribute towards the cost of the Parish Nurse scheme in its first 3 years of operation. We

look forward to some news on the project as it gathers pace. The Parish Council also continues to support the Bobby Scheme which has provided support and advice for victims of crime in the village.

The Parish Council has an unallocated reserve of nearly £14,000. It is always keen to consider supporting community initiatives. This year the Parish Council has agreed to make a contribution towards the costs of the Abingtons Open Day which was held earlier this month and it will be supporting a village event to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. This year's application for Highways Improvement was not successful but the Parish Council is keen to consider how best to use the funding that had been set aside for initiatives for speed reduction and improving road safety.

I mentioned the Parish Councils plan to market test for the maintenance contract and for insurance last year. We are working with the same insurance broker but we are now insured with a different company, a saving of £60 on the previous year's premium. The maintenance contract continues to be through CGM.

As usual the accounts are subject to audit. The draft accounts were agreed by the Parish Council this evening. They are subject to review by the internal auditor and they will be reported to the Audit Commission in June.

I mentioned the new process for accrediting Parish Councils in my report last year. Little Abington Parish Council is aiming to achieve accreditation under the new award scheme in June. I also mentioned the Transparency Code for Local Councils. It came into effect in July and I am pleased to report that Little Abington Parish Council is fully compliant. You can find Parish Council agendas and minutes and other information on the Abingtons website. <http://www.theabingtons.org.uk/parish-councils/little-abington-parish-council/>

3. Highways, including A1307

Last year we were pleased to report on the installation of interactive road signs on the A1307. We finally got the data logging, on the sign at the High Street junction, working and speeds recorded have been passed to the police. We hope that will encourage them to attend at appropriate times! The new bus shelter on the A1307 seems to be popular. This year, we have seen a more major project completed after the 3 Parish Councils requested funding for work on the Hildersham junction and the introduction of a 50 MPH limit from Abington to the dual carriageway towards Linton.

The Parish Council invested in Speedwatch equipment, which is a portable version of the interactive sign, in order to check speeds. We can check 30 & 40 (and potentially 20) MPH zones and have so far run checks in Bourn Bridge Road, High Street and Cambridge Road. Volunteers check speeds and note down numbers of cars that exceed the limits, passing details to the police. Offenders may receive a letter from them and persistent offenders may receive a visit. The police may also use the information to plan their own speed checks. Steve Garrett organises the rota and would welcome more volunteers.

The three cycleways towards Abington (from Babraham and Whittlesford to Abington, and Wandlebury to Babraham) are now seeing regular use. We are pleased to note that plans are now well advanced for a public cycleway from the Babraham roundabout to Babraham village, through the Institute grounds.

Replacement of the county streetlights in Abington is now complete with the Four Went Ways roundabouts being updated recently.

There is still a lot of discussion about the A1307 'corridor' without any definite plans. However, many options have been studied under the Cambridge City Deal, with a public consultation planned in the summer. It had been decided that the initial priority is improving the commuter routes from Four Went Ways to Cambridge.

4. Planning Matters

Local Development Plan

Examination of the new Local Development Plan by the Inspector was suspended but should restart soon on a revised draft. We very much hope that it will be agreed this year! Our suggestions, worked up by the Committee for Abington Housing, for limited developments on three sites are now included. These were based on the results of a survey of housing needs, which showed a reasonable demand for some smaller houses, in particular for older and younger local people. The wording in the local plan reflects these needs.

Planning and Committee for Abington Housing (CAH)

It seems to have been busier this year, with two or three applications in Little Abington most months. In addition, there is renewed activity on Granta Park, about which we are also consulted.

The 3 large new buildings for TWI are now in use and their new car park has also been completed. Older buildings have been demolished and some are still being refurbished.

A revised outline planning application for Granta Park Phase 2 approved. This incorporates extensive landscaping work to improve the setting of the listed Abington Hall. The first new building, close to Pampisford Road, for Illumina, has started on site. There is also a major new building for Gilead and various other projects filling up most of the gaps in the Phase 1 part of the park.

As noted above, the three small housing developments proposed by the Parish Councils' Joint Committee for Abington Housing were incorporated into the new draft Local Development Plan. There have been ongoing discussions with landowners and potential developers. There is now tangible progress, with a planning application in progress for the High Street / Pampisford Road site and preliminary layouts being prepared for the other two sites on Linton Road and Church Lane.

5. 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 bin emptying, maintenance, and also minor repairs.

There are representatives from both Parish Councils and from the users – football and cricket clubs. We have two additional representatives with a particular interest in children's play equipment.

Having installed improved play equipment for younger children, we have turned our attention to new projects. This year, we installed a robust new shelter to replace the damaged one and an outside table-tennis table.

The football pitch is in good condition and was sprayed last year.

We arrange an annual inspection of the ground, focused mostly on the play and fitness equipment. We expect a new report soon but last year's showed no serious risks. A few minor repairs were made to eliminate some minor and medium risks highlighted. We will shortly commence a weekly inspection by committee members to supplement this.

It should be noted that the ground is bordered to the north by a river, which is occasionally deep and fast-flowing, so children should always be supervised. In particular, the fitness equipment is not suitable for unsupervised use by small children.