

GREAT ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs. PM Harper
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A meeting of Great Abington Parish Council was held in Abington Institute on Monday 18th November 2024.

Present: Tony Orgee, Jane Bowen, Jill Carter, Risa Nagasaki, Louise Patten, County and District Councillor Henry Batchelor (arrived during the meeting), 4 members of the public and the Clerk

Meeting started at 7.15pm

71. Open forum - Gareth Jones highlighted that he had contacted various village bodies to highlight that the old website was due to lapse and that to maintain the domain name of Abington.org.uk action would be required. The Council should contact him if they wanted to maintain this domain. Tony Orgee explained that both councils had separate websites with new domains. Gareth Jones then discussed a planning appeal that had finally been concluded after a period of 2 years, upholding the District Council's position that a barn on Chalky Road should be demolished or modified to conform to the approved application (reduced in size and cladding removed), but no timescale was given, although 5 months was originally mentioned. Gareth reminded the meeting that the District Council (SCDC) approved the planning application despite the Parish Council's objections, and that SCDC was reluctant to take action despite many breaches of the application. To enforcement notices were issued, but SCDC's measurements of the building were incorrect. An application to modify the building should be received by the Parish Council. Gareth Jones commented on the state of the potholes in the road and stated that he felt that the 20-mph speed reduction in the village was a waste of money.

Jane Bowen explained that Gigaclear had stated that they would not be supplying fibre broadband to households on North Road, South Road and Chalky Road, which meant that the only possible option left was for Openreach to install the cables, and she was awaiting a response.

72. Apologies – Apologies were received and accepted by councillors from Stephen McDonnell and District Councillor John Batchelor.

73. Declaration of interest in items to be discussed. Tony Orgee declared an interest in two items, payment to Glenn Broad (who does work for him) and in the item about Love Abington, as he is a treasurer for this group.

74. Approval of the minutes for the last meetings held on 16th September and the planning meeting on 14th October. Councillors unanimously approved the circulated minutes for 16th September only, as the 14th of October minutes hadn't be circulated.

75. Report from Councillor Henry Batchelor –circulated

Cambridge Partnership update- the Haverhill route work had been completed and the next phase would be the new park and ride (P & R) at the Babraham site, and the busway to Addenbrookes which was to be funded by the government as it was helpful for the expansion of Cambridge. The proposed solar farm between Balsham, West Wrating and Weston Colville would be an area of 15000 hectares, which would make it the largest solar farm in the UK. The energy generated would go to Burwell via overhead cables. The applicants, Kingsway Solar, were consulting local people via an informal consultation which run until mid-December. There were likely to be some community benefits to having the farm. Henry also highlighted that funding was available to local groups from the Community Chest.

76. Report from Councillor John Batchelor –circulated - he was unable to attend the meeting.

77. Highway issues/matters

- a) Update from SCDC on planning irregularities, to be discussed later.
- b) Update on three 'Playground' signs to be installed below the triangular 'children crossing' & 'school' signs by Ian Blackman when he installs the bus stop sign. The signs would be ordered now clarification had been received on the size and fixings required- **Action Clerk.**
- c) Update on footpath between Pampisford Road and Chalky Road– the council asked both landowners or their representatives to maintain their verges and requesting that they contribute to the £200 cost the council has incurred this year cutting back their verges. Tony Orgee and the Clerk met with Simon Lewis, TWI Group Property Manager on 9th October. He agreed to clarify whether TWI own areas of land along the footpath to the right leading to Chalky Road and to find out if they would fund or initiate a maintenance regime for this footpaths verges. Simon confirmed that TWI own the fields either side of the path and most likely the old railway cutting area behind their field.
- d) Clearing path to wood on previous named LSA Estate. The Clerk had not written to the landowners with property either side of the footpath leading to the wood from the North Road side, asking them to cut back their verges overhanging the footpath by a specific date, but would send the letter/email after this meeting. Henry Batchelor said he was aware of SCDC/CCC cutting back verges and invoicing landowners but mainly for Highway verges, rather than footpaths.
- e) Update on whether the Speedwatch Group has agreed to use the new Mobile vehicle activated sign. Tony Orgee explained that the village Speedwatch Group no longer exists, and that to install the signs would take 2-3 people.

78. Planning – separate sheet

- a) Separate listing of planning decisions at end of agenda.
 - b) Planning applications to be considered:
 - i) Ref 24/ 03980/HFUL - Universal House High Street -single storey extension
- Mr Mannion, the planning applicant, addressed the meeting explaining that the property continued to have issues with flooding in the basement, which made it an unusable space for his family, therefore his architect had suggested that the basement be filled in. This meant that more space was required to make up for the rooms that would be lost in the basement.

He referred to objections that had been submitted to this application.

Tony Orgee proposed that the application be supported which was seconded by Jill Carter, with the support of all councillors (excluding his opposite neighbour, **Louise Patten, who took no part in the discussion or decision.** **Tony Orgee declared an interest in the payment to Glenn Broad and took no part in this item.**

79. Finance

a) Authorisation of the payments in the table below. **Jill Carter proposed the payment be made (once the work was undertaken) to Glenn Broad which was seconded by Jane and Risa seconded the motion. Tony Orgee proposed that all the remaining payments be authorised by the Council, which was seconded by Jill Carter, and supported by all councillors.**

b) Income – nil apart from interest.

c) Transfer of memory stick to Chairman was made.

Payment to be authorised by councillors:

Bank transfer	Glenn Broad	Cut church hedge	£100.00
Bank transfer	Brookfield	Cut grass on verges & at Larkfield	£360.00
Bank transfer	Paula Harper	Pay for October	£418.08
Bank transfer	Paula Harper	Pay for September	£418.08
Bank transfer	Brookfield	Invoice 3019	£564.00
Bank transfer	SSE	Power to streetlight- paid by DD	£31.39

d) Can more councillors be authorised to use the Unity and Barclays bank accounts? **Councillors unanimously agreed that Jane should be added to the list of authorised councillors for the Unity bank account and Jill Carter to the Barclays account. Councillors signed bank mandate to remove Emma Pery.**

e) Can the council authorise the Clerk's pay increase to £13.69/hr (from £13.02) backdated to April 2024 in accordance with the SLCC/NALC agreement. **Councillors unanimously authorised this pay increased with backdated payments from April 2024.**

f) Bank balances:

Barclays Bank balances

Community Account - £1.00

Business Interest - £54,132.85 on 31/09/2024

Active Saver Account £22,689.31 on 31/09/2024

Unity Account - £89,971.75 on 31/10/2024

80. Agree Budget and precept for 2025-26

Councillors agreed that the proposed budget should be revised to change the community scheme to £2000 and the precept should increase by 5% to £18,900 (£18,500+5%). Councillors confirmed that the Clerk should discount the funds held for Larkfield maintenance each year according to the costs incurred. Councillors unanimously agreed the following changes to the reserves held:

- **Remove the £900 for the pandemic from the reserves.**
- **Change the £1200 held for tree planting to biodiversity work.**

- **Leave £1750 for LHI.**

81. Year end and Internal Auditors Report actions

a) As requested by the External Auditors, a form has been posted up stating that the audit is completed, with issues highlighted. The external auditor found the council's website inaccessible.

82. Actions from the last meeting

a) **Action :** Tony to send a copy of the Linton Road Greenway plan to Henry Batchelor to get the hedge between Larkfield and the kennels cut. Martin Meehan (CCC) sent copies of the latest plans for the change of speed signs for Linton Road to the council on 26th September, stating that these were the latest version of the demarcation of this area.

83. Flood water remaining on Recreation Ground (ARGC) and on nearby land Mr Mannion was given the opportunity to speak but wanted to hear the council's findings.

- Update from Tony. Louise Patten explained that the minutes from 11th January 1971 ARGC meeting mentioned a drain; the land had been purchased in 1970. A ditch was on the western boundary and on the southern boundary with an 18 foot conduit at the boundary between the cricket ground and the play area towards the school. The MUGA slopes slightly probably due to a disused drainage ditch which will have been filled in. There was a pipe going by the back of the MUGA then under the MUGA. Between 1971-1989 the disused ditch was filled in.
- ARGC has had three companies quote to resurface the MUGA, remove the fencing and panels as the cost of enlarging the area is beyond the available funds.
- Tony Orgee explained that the council had noted Jason Mannion concerns and had considered the estimates that he had obtained. The council had decided to find out more about the history of the land, but had until now found no records were available from ARGC or the History Group and the verbal recollection of the drainage on the land was conflicting.

Louise Patten agreed to continue reading through the old ARGC minutes and to report back to the council on her findings.

Mr Mannion was keen to establish if there was a disused ditch under the MUGA, as there was a ditch on the school side of it. He explained that the Recreation Ground (RG) flooded at 10pm earlier in 2024, and that it took 1.5 days for water to drain from the RG and a further 4 months for it to drain from about an acre of RG land. Jill suggested that the water stood for so long because the water aquifer was full, and trees had fallen into the river upstream may have impacted on the situation. Mr Mannion observed that his field was flooded from January-to May but noted that it was a flood plan area. He explained that his field is water laden and has been for several years but that this year it has been more conspicuous and more of a problem to him. It was noted that the water table and topography would influence the flood water drainage. The pipe near the MUGA mentioned in the old ARGC minutes is only 15mm diameter. Louise Patten observed that TWI land flooded first and then the Recreation Ground flooded, but that the water did not come from the river.

Tony Orgee explained that a meeting had been held recently (attended by 7 residents), by a representative of Anglian Water and South Staffordshire Water considering creating a water meadow beyond Linton, to hold back water when it rains heavily, as part of the biodiversity measures to be introduced to improve biodiversity and the quality of local rivers. The

Wildlife Trust and Granat Park are looking at making improvements to the river by creating weirs and other initiatives to improve the speed of the water flow.

The Wildlife Trust and Granta Park

had plans to improve the introduce weirs and other mechanisms to increase the flow of the river. Jill noted that the council should record when, how and where the ARG floods for future reference.

Mr Mannin requested that some kind of drainage be installed to get rid of flood water and asked whether ARGC would permit him to dig where he has been told a pipe ends on the Recreation Ground- a decision for ARGC. **The Parish Council decided to continue to monitor the situation and to keep a record of when flooding occurred, and that the Council would continue to search old records to try to find information about any drainage system.**

b) Email from SCDC Flood Team asking the council what action it plans to take about the flooding of a local resident's field earlier in the 2024. Having attended this parish council meeting, Mr Mannion was fully updated by the council.

84. Items raised by councillors

a) Update Community Warden scheme – the warden has been appointed and the scheme is now running for residents.

b) Update on Parish Council email addresses and finding a new website host/manager. One quote has been forwarded to councillors, the other company suggested does not do the work required by the council. **Action: Clerk** to obtain further quotes.

c) Councillors to discuss whether the two parish village councils should merge. It was suggested that there were pros and cons to both options and that the residents should be consulted on their views, with a list of pros and cons made available on all village communication forums to enable people to decide which option to support. The way forward would be discussed at the two councils' liaison meeting later this week.

d) Poor condition of the footway down the High Street from Pampisford Road and from the Institute to the bridge, where a resident had fallen from his wheelchair due to the poor quality surface. Action Clerk: to arrange a meeting with Bradley Southwell and the representatives of the council.

e) Parking on the verge at the entrance to Magna Close and parking on the central grassed area and the suggestion that SCDC create additional parking spaces. The Housing Officer Andrew Cole has returned with alternative dates to meet with Tony and Jill at Magna Close. Clerk to circulate dates to get a time agreed.

f) Request that the hedge on Linton Road be cut back away from the path. **Action: Clerk** to write to landowner requesting the hedge be cut back from the path on Linton Road.

g) Access to ARG for multi-use games area MUGA work. **Action: Clerk** to find the previous access agreement to see if remains valid for further work; it may be possible to get access to the MUGA via the school land which may reduce the costs and the issues.

h) Response to SCDC about the council's experience of the Neighbourhood Plan in action. **Action: Jane Bowen** to circulate her records of the council's experience of the NP to councillors prior to replying to SCDC, including one irregularity which took a year to get a reply to, and the fact that in some instances log cabins erected as temporary accommodation have been granted permanent status under permitted development, despite planning conditions stating that it should be removed once the main structure is habitable.

i) **Action: Louise Patten** to meet with Ian Blackman to discuss the location of the recreation ground seat, before the seat can be ordered by the Clerk.

85. Report on the presentation about the Anglian Water Chalk stream restoration project- discussed earlier in meeting under item 83c (7 residents attended).

86. Biodiversity responsibility

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must (before January 2024):

Does the council wish to adopt a biodiversity policy based on the template provided and circulated to councillors.

Action: Clerk to circulate diversity policy template to councillors and the draft policy to be considered at the next Parish Council meeting.

87. Correspondence

- a) The dead horse chestnut at the pumping station tree on the High Street that was leaning towards the road and had been reported to Anglian Water (AW), blew down in the wind landing on a parked car. The Clerk had been in contact with Anglian Water numerous times by phone asking for action to be taken to cut down the tree and was last told that permission was being sought to reduce the size of the tree to SCDC as the location was within the conservation area. Another resident had emailed Anglian Water about the safety of the tree, asking for action to be taken to safeguard residents from the leaning dead horse chestnut tree.
- b) Email about an application for an alcohol licence for 79a High Street, Gt Abington. The property, currently operating as the ReTreat hair salon, will be converted it into a cafe/restaurant. No planning application was required because the classification for planning purposes for cafes and hairdressers was the same.

Details of the alcohol licence application:

The sale by retail of alcohol for consumption both on and off the premises.

Monday – Saturday: 08:00 – 23:00

Sunday: 08:00 – 16:00

Activity: Hours Open to the Public

Monday – Saturday: 07:00 – 23:00

Sunday: 08:00 – 16:00

Councillors unanimously wanted to recommend that the application to sell alcohol for off-site consumption be refused and that the business opening hours be limited to 10am-10pm Monday-Saturday and 10am-3pm on Sunday, with no alcohol sold within the last hour of business. Councillors were also concerned about the limited parking in the already crowded village centre, and to protect the trade of existing local businesses.

Tony Orgee did not participate in the item 87c as Glenn Broad does work for him.

c)Magna Close resident highlighted that the shrubbery behind the noticeboard was overhanging and wetting residents passing by. **The Clerk has been quoted £60 by Glenn Broad to have it cut back and the waste removed and a quote to cut the church hedge for £100. Jane Bowen proposed that the council authorise expenditure of £60 to cut back the verge behind the notice board and the £100 to cut back the church hedge , which was seconded by Louise Patten, with the support of Risa and Jill.** Action Clerk to get the noticeboard hedge cut and to advise the churchwardens that the hedge could be cut back.

Tony Orgee did not participate in the item 87d as he is a member of the Love Abington Group.

d) Request for a donation from Love Abington of £100 to fund food hampers and small gifts for families in need and residents in the Abingtons who are experiencing loneliness, grief and loss this Christmas. **Risa Nagasaki proposed that the council donate £100 to the Love Abington Group, which was seconded by Louise Patten, with the support of Jill and Jane.**

e) SCDC asked if the Council could update them on the verges it manages, the frequency of the cuts and whether new areas are managed by the council. SCDC suggested that it could take over management of some verges. **Action Clerk** to find out how often the verges would be cut by CCC contractors, and whether it could include Larkfield land.

f) Request for church hedge to be cut by ARGC as it was widening into the recreation ground. Discussed earlier in meeting under item 87c

88 Items for the next meeting on 20th December 2025

Holiday dates, biodiversity, MUGA, verge cutting by CCC, flooding and merging two council.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

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Parish Council decisions since the last full meeting

a) 24/02507/FUL – The Franklin Building 2, Granta Park - Extension and conversion of the existing R&D building (following part demolition of the existing building), together with the provision of a substation, enclosed external plant, landscaping, car and cycle parking and associated infrastructure
The Parish Council recommended the applicant address the concerns raised by the consultees and resubmit a revised application at a meeting held on 19/08/2024

b) 24/02608/HFUL – 100 High Street - Single storey front and rear extensions and internal alterations.
Parish Council recommended the application be approved , but queried some details at a meeting held on 19/08/2024

District Council decisions

24/030 83 - 88 High Street - Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of a single storey self/custom build dwelling in the garden of 88 High Street0
Parish Council recommended the application be refused at a meeting held on 27/06/2024

24/01967/REM – 55 North Road - Reserve matters application for approval of Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and scale for a new dwelling on land adjacent to 55 High Street . New vehicular & pedestrian access to 55 North Road following outline permission 23/02245/OUT
Parish Council was unable to comment due to the insufficient information being available at a meeting on 27/06/2024.
District Council approved: 08/08/2024