

*Abbots Bromley Parish Council*



**Annual Report**



**May 2009**  
Version 1

This report has been compiled by Abbots Bromley Parish Council using input from a number of different sources. Any views expressed are those of the original authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the Parish Council

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To be added after the meeting  
To be added after the meeting
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## Introduction

### ***The annual report***

The purpose of this annual report is to make freely available information about the work of the parish council and other community organisations. The council hopes that you will find the information useful and understandable.

This report aims to bring together in one place key details about the activities of the parish council in a manner recommended as good practice by the government for Quality Councils.

### ***Summary to all homes***

A summary of this annual report from the parish council is to be included in the June/July 2009 ***Bromley Bulletin*** distributed to all households in the parish.

### ***Also available on-line***

An electronic copy of this report is available on the village website where you can view it or print your own copy – [www.abbotsbromley.com](http://www.abbotsbromley.com).

## Council Members and Officer – 2008/09

### **Council Members**

Philip Chalres                      840251                      Chairman  
Poplar Farm, Bromley Hurst, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3EQ

Roger Jarman                      840678                      Vice Chairman  
New Cottage, Goose Lane, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DE

Ray Bell                              841090  
20 St Nicholas Way, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3EB

Alan Elkington                      841011  
Fairview, Ashbrook Lane, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DW

Linda Fox                              840315  
Coleshill Lodge, Lichfield Road, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DN

Karen Johns                      840381  
59 Seedcroft Lane, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3DS

Roger Mills                      840703  
The Crofts, Market Place, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3BP

Caroline Veitch                      840361  
14 Alfred Lyons Close, Abbots Bromley, WS15 3EY

Vacancy

David Eatough served on the council until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008 and was replaced by Cllr Ray Bell and Steve Coxon served on the council until 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 and was replaced by Cllr Karen Johns. Barrie Waring served on the council until 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2009 and his vacancy is currently being advertised.

### **Officer:-**

Mrs Sue Buxton                      01543 472346  
Clerk to the Parish Council  
Four Oaks Farm, Hadley End, Yoxall, Burton on Trent, DE13 8PF  
Email: [parish.council@abbotsbromley.com](mailto:parish.council@abbotsbromley.com)

## WORKING GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES

### ***Working Groups***

The chairman and vice chairman are entitle to serve ex officio, on all groups

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Member(s)</b>
Competitions	Cllr Mills
Finance	Cllrs Elkington, Mrs Fox and Mrs Veitch
Newsletter	Cllr Jarman (Editor) Cllr Elkington (Distribution)
Planning	All Councillors
Recreation	Cllrs Elkington, Mrs Veitch plus 1 vacancy
Traffic & Parking	Cllrs Elkington, Mrs Fox plus 1 vacancy
Village Property	Cllrs Bell, Mills plus 1 vacancy

### ***Representatives***

Almhouses	Chairman – ex officio
Crime & Social Issues	Cllr Charles
Fairtrade	Cllr Charles
Finance Officer	Cllr Mrs Veitch
RISES	Cllr Mrs Fox
School Governor	None
United Charities	Cllrs Charles and Elkington
Village Hall	Cllr Waring
Vital Villages	Cllr Elkington

**Reports to the Annual Parish Assembly  
Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2009, 8.00 pm  
In the Village Hall, Abbots Bromley**

**Introduction:** Again this year the Parish Assembly, in that the various verbal reports are replaced with a written statement. This document contains the reports submitted in advance of the assembly, and question on the contents may be asked during the open forum. Additional reports will be added after the meeting.

**Contents:**

Parish Council Report	Philip Charles
Parish Council Finance	To be added
Village Hall Report	Mike King
Community First Responders	Colin Palmer
Community Transport	David Thompson
Richard Clarke First School	John Hough
Youth Initiative	Caroline Veitch
Staffordshire County Councillor's Report	Philip Atkins
East Staffordshire Borough Councillor's Report	Alex Fox
Parish Council Financial Statement	To be added
Minutes of the Parish Assembly 2008	

**Omissions:** None

**Issue Details:** Version 1 – 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2009

**Changes:** None

<b>PARISH COUNCIL REPORT</b>
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**Planning** - During the year we have been consulted on 38 planning applications (compared with 60 last year). These ranged from the usual tree lopping to/the development behind Ivy House. The Council (and the community as a whole) still awaits the ESBC decision on the Wind Farm at Bagots Park, which keeps being promised but has not been forthcoming.

**Street Lighting** - The major 'talking point' this year has been the replacement streetlights on the main road, which resulted in several residents contacting the Clerk. After meetings with the contractors together with Philip Atkins (Staffordshire County Council) and Alex Fox (East Staffs Borough Council) a compromise has been worked out. It has to be pointed out however that the vast majority of the residents' comments have been in favour of the new lighting scheme.

**Bromley Bulletin** - During the year, as a result of software problems the Bromley Bulletin has had to revert to a single A4 sheet, which at times has resulted in a somewhat cramped format, hopefully the difficulties will be solved before too long.

**Christmas Tree** - This year the Christmas tree was again donated by the Brandrick family, unfortunately high winds over night snapped the taller than usual tree and resulted in a phone call next day to re-erect a shorter version. At some point the Council will have to make a decision on whether to use the Western Red Cedar which is growing on the Green.

**Parish Council Surgeries** - Our regular bi-monthly Saturday morning surgeries (10.00 am to 11.00 am) in Church House have continued to provide access to Councillors. These have created a useful means of communication with the public.

**Traffic** - The Council is aware of increasing concerns about traffic through the parish and in particular HGV vehicles using the village main street, unfortunately the lack of support from Staffordshire Highways Department continues to prevent any meaningful solutions being implemented. After a short gap the Speed Watch group has been enlarged and is now operating on three days each week, several new volunteers are awaiting training, which should enable the group to cover five days regularly. After a lengthy delay the 30mph signs were moved in Goose Lane and Yeatsall Lane to cover the Nursery entrance, such measures however, only work if residents are prepared to conform to them.

**Best Kept Village Competition** - Our entry in the Best Kept Village competition last year resulted in Abbots Bromley failing to reach the third round stage for the first time since 1999 and ending a sequence of success (three thirds, three seconds, three firsts). No major problems were pointed out in the judges' comments, we just need to be more careful to 'fine tune' the image given during the competition period, May to August. Dog fouling will be a difficulty this year as a few inconsiderate owners seem to be incapable of cleaning up after their animals. Unfortunately these are village residents as no 'outsiders' will be bring their dogs into the village to foul our pavements!

**Membership of the Council** - Over the last year, three Councillors, David Eatough, Steve Coxon and Barrie Waring, have resigned owing to pressure of work. They have all given valuable service to the community. Ray Bell and Karen Johns have filled two places and the last vacancy is currently being advertised. As the Council now consists of four Councillors who stood at the election and five who are co-opted the Quality Council Status will lapse in the summer, as we no longer meet the electoral mandate for re-accreditation.

**Youth Initiative** - The Council has continued to support the youth group in their attempts to obtain a Youth Shelter, although at present a site has not been forthcoming. The funding bodies have agreed to carry over the grants into this financial year.

**Cllr Philip Charles**  
**Parish Council Chairman**

<b>PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES</b>
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The parish council has its own Financial Regulations, which set down the rules by which the finances of the council are managed. The council employs an independent internal auditor who reviews the financial records. At the end of the year an audit return is completed and submitted to the Audit Commission for the purposes of external audit.

The council's financial regulations can be viewed on the website or via arrangements with the clerk.

The unapproved financial statements for the council for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009 will be tabled at the Parish Assembly and the final accounts for the year added after the parish council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2009.

**Sue Buxton  
Parish Clerk**

## **ABBOTS BROMLEY VILLAGE HALL**

The Annual general Meeting of the Village Hall was held in April, where I am pleased to report the vacancies on the Committee and Trustees were filled by Volunteers. The reluctance of Village personnel to come forward to manage this important facility is regretted but that seems to be the norm these days.

I would like to thank Peter Smith, Linda Fox and Eric Roy for their support during my seven year term as Chairman and to the rest of the Committee who will continue when we stand down.

The income in 2008 at £17,370 was slightly ahead of last year but this was off set by the increase in expenditure at £13,980. The positive contribution of just over £3,000 will be placed in the Sinking Fund for know expenditure in future years.

The whole village should express sincere thanks to ESBC and the Community Council of Staffordshire for their financial support for major items of expenditure over the past 10 years. Without it the cost of running the Hall would have been increased by a further £25,000.

During 2009 we need to replace the boiler as well as re-painting the external joinery, in all about £7,000 of expenditure. We hope to receive grants for approximately 50% towards these essential repairs and maintenance.

Keeping the whole Hall clean and well maintained is a commitment of the Committee as this ensures that thos who use the facility help to keep it that way.

Finally, I would like to wish the 2009 committee the best for the future of this magnificent facility. I do hope the Village gives them the support they deserve. Please remember they are all volunteers.

**Mike King  
Chairman of the Management Committee 2001-2008**

## **Bromley Community First Responders - 2007/2008**

The first responder group has recently completed its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation.

During the last year we have made 355 responses to emergency calls under the direction of the ambulance service. The total to date, being 1240 since inception of the group.

The standard of cover we aim to achieve is 24 hours, 7 days per week. We have met 99.8% of this target. The deficiency being accounted for by members' holidays and vehicle maintenance.



Membership of the group stands at 9, with 8 active responders.

Calls have been predominately in Abbots Bromley, but have extended to outer areas such as Fradley, Sudbury and Little Haywood as and when required.

During the year fund raising commenced to replace our original response vehicle. This proved to be successful and a new vehicle was purchased in August. We acknowledge the help of local authorities, grant making trusts, individuals, local fund raising and Mitsubishi Motors - all of whom contributed to the satisfactory completion of this project.

During the year Staffordshire Ambulance Service was absorbed into the West Midlands Ambulance service. At present WMAS are supportive of the efforts of CFR groups, we hope that this will continue in order to assure the continued operation of groups like ours.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported our group and especially the responders within our group who have given their time throughout the period.

**Colin Palmer**  
**Co-ordinator**

### **Abbots Bromley Community Transport**

Last year the community transport clocked up a mileage of 2,725 miles, we still have 6 drivers.

Last year the Staffordshire County Council gave us a grant of £479.00 this year the grant has gone up a bit to £484.00. Out of this I have to pay the insurance which has now gone up to £197.18 and pay the driver what they have earned.

The Queens Hospital, Lichfield Station, Rugeley, and the Doctor Surgery, are still the most used places.

The scheme is still working very well.

We don't have a big demand, but what we do have keeps us going.

**David P Thompson**  
**Co-ordinator, Abbots Bromley Community Transport**

### **Richard Clarke First School Report**

Here is a brief summary of some key elements of the past 12 months.

**Financial:** The budget for 2009/2010 has just been agreed by the governors; it is in line with previous budgets, and balances revenues and expenditures of about £412,000 for the financial year.

There are a number of key issues that have to be accommodated.

- School budgets are very sensitive to changing pupil numbers. Each pupil attracts revenues of about £2900 per year. For RCFS, this is about £300,000 in total for this Financial Year.

- We have had to pay £15,000 following Job Evaluation. However, we had planned for this and had prudently kept sufficient in our reserves.
- We are told that LEA resources will be targeted on “pockets of deprivation” and will depend, even more than at present, on the characteristics of individual schools and pupils.
- When these deprivation-targeted grants are taken into account, the grants per pupil to other schools will be tighter than in the past.
- Premature retirement and redundancy costs have traditionally been funded by the County Council. From 2009/10, 20% of these costs will have to be met from the school’s budget.
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) assumes that cost pressures on schools will increase by 3.1% p.a. for the next three years but that schools will make efficiency savings of 1.0% p.a. Consequently, the MFG has been set at 2.1%.
- The Local Authority plans to claw back any reserve balances over 8.0% of a school’s total budget. In the case of RCFS this would be £39,000; our reserve balance is £38,000.

By far the largest contributors to costs are the salaries of teaching and other staff. With on-costs, this is £306,000 for 2009/10, representing 75% of the RCFS budget. Once we have paid the salaries, rates, maintenance, insurance and mandatory professional service fees from Stafford, we have very little discretionary spend left. Our energy budget of £10,000 is the most likely source of savings and we are implementing a number of cost-saving procedures.

This year we have not planned for any income from lettings which, in the past, has been about £2,000 p.a. The Ballet Classes have relocated to the Village Hall and nothing has yet replaced them. We propose to publicise the opportunities for hiring the School Hall. We are trying to reinforce the position of the school in the local community and, of course, to supplement our budget.

We have always attempted to have a balanced budget, without any deficit or under-spend. Revenue received for children on the roll is spent while they are at school and not used to mitigate future overspends. We are, of course, fortunate to have the RCFS Endowment Fund at our disposal, from which £10,000 has been used this year on a library refurbishment, new library books, and new dining-room tables. We are also grateful for our active and successful PFA when we need to supplement the budget.

**Number of Pupils:** The number of pupils on our roll varies widely from year to year, and this directly determines our funding. In 1998 our number on roll was 145; by 2001/2002 it had fallen to 107.

The number on the roll for next academic year is about 105. We plan to carry a small class of 15 into Year 2, as a matter of policy, and this small cohort will stay with us for the next three years. We can cope with some variation in intake in our financial planning and can have one small cohort in the school, but we will not be able to manage if we have a sequence of lean years. Worryingly, we are currently forecasting an intake of only 86 for 2011/12. This is too far into the future to affect this year’s budget planning, but it is an unwanted, small black cloud on the horizon.

We still take nearly 25% of our children from outside our catchment area and this enables us to support our ideal of one year group per class. However, this is a significant reduction on the 40% of a few years ago.

We are planning a major initiative to publicise RCFS via our web-site, open days and targeted notices around our area. However, we are limited in how we are allowed to represent RCFS in competition with other schools. It is not unreasonable to expect that the credit crunch will cause parents to reappraise private education and look for good state schools. However, the intention of Abbots Bromley School to admit boys up to Year 3 has to be seen as a potential threat to RCFS.

**Staffing:** After a very welcome respite from interviewing, the Staffing Committee are again tasked with the recruitment of a full-time teacher for the next academic year. A teacher with a 0.6 teaching commitment is leaving and we are seizing this opportunity to recruit a full-time teacher and to return to the position where the Head-teacher (0.4), complemented by Helen Bennett (0.6), on her welcome return from illness, is the only shared teaching commitment.

The position of Office Services Manager has proved to be a very valuable complement to the management of RCFS, particularly with regard to the financial planning and control in the school.

**Premises:** We have refurbished the library, rebuilt and reinforced the external, covered walk-way between classrooms and built a canopy to provide a covered area immediately adjacent to the Reception classroom.

In last year's report I raised the spectre of a catastrophic boiler failure which had the potential to disrupt teaching and destroy our budget. I can now report that the Local Authority have agreed to pay for the boiler to be replaced. This removes the potential budget impact and should be completed before the next cold spell. It will also be far more efficient than the existing boiler and should help us deliver the 1.0% savings demanded by the Local Authority.

**School Performance:** We have not had an OFSTED inspection in the past 12 months, but we have been assessed by our inspector as making good progress towards meeting School Improvement objectives and in addressing the priorities from the previous inspection visit. According to our School Improvement Partner (i.e. inspector) we have good processes in place for self-review. Further, "the governors and senior leadership team have a clear focus on continuous improvement and self-evaluation . . . providing an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development."

We were also audited by an external assessor to see if we met the standards laid down by Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) directive. We received a compliance certificate which will be re-assessed in three years time and were congratulated by the auditor. This is especially encouraging since our new Office Services Manager had only been in post a few days when the audit took place.

**SAFTAS:** For the fourth year running, pupils from Richard Clarke First School have won a clutch of SAFTAs, awarded by Staffordshire County Council, for digital movie-making. The awards are presented in an Oscar-style ceremony which the children (and adults) love. It also rewards and inspires the excellent and creative use of ICT that takes place in school every day.

**School Self-Review: Parents' Questionnaire:** We conducted our annual survey of parents' views and received an excellent response.

Parents are asked to agree or disagree with each of 12 statements about the school. Here is a summary of the results.

Statement	% Agree
My child likes school	98.0%
My child is making good progress at school	97.9%
Behaviour in the school is good	95.8%
My child gets the right amount of homework	86.0%
The teaching is good	95.9%
I am kept well-informed about my child's progress	89.8%
I feel comfortable approaching the school with a question or problem	98.0%
The school expects my child to work hard to achieve his or her best	96.0%
The school works closely with parents	90.0%
The school is well led and managed	100.0%
The school is helping my child to become mature and responsible	100.0%
The school provides an interesting range of after-school activities	92.0%

**Note:** We had 50 responses, so each individual response represents 2.0%

It would have been good to see 100% agreement across the board but this is quite unrealistic in such a small school. Nonetheless, every observation made by parents is followed up and there is a clear action taken to address it. Take the perennial issue of homework, for example. We have held two well-attended workshops for parents to help them understand how they can support the teaching of creative writing and basic numeracy, at home.

Parents were also asked to tell us what they considered to be the greatest strength of RCFS and what single thing they would like to see improved.

There was a general consensus that the great strengths of RCFS were the happy, safe, friendly environment and the excellent, approachable, caring staff, teaching respect for others and superb core values.

In the "should try harder" category we were asked to improve communication, have less split teaching and a homework policy which engaged parents. As I have reported, we have tried to address all of these concerns.

**Summary:** The teaching and management teams at RCFS are now established and working very well together to achieve the many teaching and learning objectives that have been set. The financial management of the school is being handled very well within a budget that is far from generous. In the longer term, in order to be financially safe, we must strive harder to increase the pupil intake over the next few years; we must examine all opportunities to secure additional income for the school (e.g. lettings); and we must make sure that we beat the efficiency savings demanded of us. In all of these objectives we welcome any help, advice and support that the community of Abbots Bromley can offer.

**John Hough**  
**Chair of Governors, Richard Clarke First School**

## **Youth Initiative**

The Parish Council was approached some time ago to establish facilities in the village suitable for teenagers. The Parish Council has set aside funding for this project and with support from the Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services, a group, made up of parents and supporters has been formed. The Group is the Abbots Bromley 4 Youth Group. This group has been trying to establish suitable facilities in the village and to act as a forum to represent young peoples views in the community. The village currently provides facilities for younger children but nothing for youths.

The group is considering a youth shelter and a youth club. Youngsters in the village have been working hard to fund raise for the project. They have secured additional funding of £2,000 already towards funding for a youth shelter. The Parish Council has approached the Trustees of the Millennium Green to seek permission to site the shelter on the Millennium Green. Work is progressing on this and the group wish to ensure that any such shelter is not only appropriate for the youth but in keeping with the surroundings.

In addition, the Council is exploring funding opportunities to update the Millennium Green play area.

**Cllr Caroline Veitch**

## **STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR UTTOXETER RURAL DIVISION - REPORT**

This is my last Report before the County Council Election on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

As Conservative Group Leader on the County Council with the Shadow Cabinet I scrutinise the County Council's performance and look to the future direction of and vision for the County Council.

I am also a member of the Pensions Panel.

The past year has been a difficult one with the economic climate rapidly deteriorating. The Pension Fund has dropped in value by some £700 million to £1.7 billion. This Fund is still well funded compared with many, being in the top 100 and is guaranteed by you the Taxpayer, so it is vital the Trustees get it right for everyone involved.

It has been a controversial year for the County Council, with Building Schools for the Future (BSF) accelerated in Tamworth. This part of the project costs £100m and Labour proposed to close 1 High School, close all the 6<sup>th</sup> Forms and merge them into one 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre run by an Academy under Landau Forte. After much protest the closure of the High School was abandoned, but with the private sector finding it hard to find money for Private Finance Initiatives this project has a difficult future. The government have promised to fund the interest, but that will have to come from somewhere. The total cost of BSF to the County is £750m with a funding gap of £100m.

The Building Colleges for the Future has been put on hold, as over allocation has happened nationally. The Learning Skills Council over allocated capital by £300m nationally and South Staffordshire College is now in limbo, awaiting the outcome of the review. The funding for colleges and 6<sup>th</sup> Forms comes through the Local Education Authority as a commissioner of courses next year. Will there be enough money?

The closure of Care Homes under Changing Lives has continued with some Extra Care places being built after the event. Employees have been signing agreements over Pay Modernisation the cost to date some £43m. A proposal to sell off County Farms to raise cash was scrapped in the spring and the Stafford Arts Space has been delayed but not forgotten.

Some schools have been faced with difficult budget decisions and the Council has faced a redundancy bill of £9m+ over Early Years staffing. Under Labour Nursery Nurses were put in front of nursery classes under the supervision of reception class teachers. This was wrong and cheaper, there should be a fully qualified teacher with nursery children. Although schools had the cash, the County has been left with the redundancy bill and the cost of single status. Total cost to County over £43m to date, cost to schools over £8m in back pay.

**The Council Tax**, which forms the greater part of your bill, has risen this year at the County by 2.45%. This figure was proposed as an amendment at the Full Council meeting. I put forward an alternate budget of 2% with a £50 discount to taxpayers over 85 years old and released it at the same time the Labour Cabinet papers went out recommending a 3.5% increase.

I also proposed in the alternate budget a £30m investment in our roads using the £1.5m that Labour were using from our alternate budget last year to fund major investment in repair works which in turn saved £1.2m a year in maintenance. This was all signed off by the Responsible Officer as a balanced budget. These are the fresh innovative type of ideas the Council needs.

I have also been involved in trying to stop unnecessary housing numbers being thrust on us by the Government. The West Midlands had 3 plans, growth, managed growth and growth at any cost. It is the last one the government is thrusting on us. The difference between the 3 West Midlands options is vast stretching from 380k to 600k houses by 2025.

The Waste to Energy Plant is progressing with 2 companies being selected this year for the final selection. The PFI for this is in place and planning permission has been granted. A new office block costing some £30m is planned for Stafford on Tipping Street Car Park and while it fits with Stafford Town Centre Plans and has planning permission, the business case should show greater efficiency savings, it brings staff together from 17 different buildings.

From these figures you can see that much is changing at the County Council in its strategic role and the amount of work and funding that is needed. It is not impossible; it just needs management of the highest calibre that no amount of Public Relations will conceal if it is not up to scratch. We need to prioritise the priorities and stop doing some things.

Locally last years my **Local Members Initiative Funds** went to:

Mayfield Heritage Group	£439
Kingstone PC	£1,000
Kingstone Local News	£600
Bramshall Kids Club	£500
Mayfield Memorial Hall Committee	£1,000
Dove Valley First Responders	£800

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue	£750
Bramshall News Sheet	£300
Mayfield Youth Club	£500
Tom Boden Memorial Sports Trust	£1,000
Uttoxeter Hearts of Oak Morris Men	£1,000
Cauldon and Uttoxeter Canals Trust	£300
Mayfield and Ellastone First Responders	£800
Talbot First School	£90
Abbots Bromley Parish Council	£920.55

Funding for signs, news sheets, Home Fire Safety Checks, First Responder Blue Light Training, play areas, village hall facilities improvements, chess competitions for young people, alterations to the change to the street lights in Abbots Bromley and events were among this list. The LMIS funds also helped draw in other funding streams.

If anyone wants to apply for funding from this year's £10,000 for local schemes, the forms are available from the County Website.

Locally I have had meetings with your Parish Council, SCC Lighting officers and representatives of E.On about the street lights in Abbots Bromley and their design and lighting. There are changes still to be done to them, and I have seen extra funds have been put to the project.

Road maintenance and traffic congestion continue to be the main issues and I have had several meetings with Council officers to discuss Highway matters in many areas including Admaston, Bramshall, Stramshall, Denstone, Rocester, Mayfield and Abbots Bromley. I have also had meeting with JCB Directors about traffic in the surrounding area. New Footways have been constructed in Stramshall and College Road, Denstone.

Community Speed Watches have been set up in many of our villages and Community First Responders continue to serve their Communities.

This is only a snap shot of the many things that I come across in a year and if anyone wishes to know more on any subject do not hesitate to contact me.

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**Cllr Philip Atkins**

<p><b>EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCILLOR          BAGOTS WARD - REPORT</b></p>
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There have been a number of significant events during the last years, which have had an impact on Abbot Bromley and area. I list these as follows:

**1) Wind Farm**

The planning application submitted for eight wind trbines on Bagot Park in 2007/8 was the subject of considerable debate with strong arguments for and against. The planners posed a number of questions around environmental issues. These have to date not been answered. The application has not moved forward to a conclusion and

the applicants have not pushed for a decision. The application remain on the alive and further action is awaited.

## **2) Other planning applications**

It is worth noting that interest in making use of Blithfield reservoir's visitor appeal increased. A planning application for holiday log cabins is being processed and the approval has been given for a "substantial" house at Port Lane. Fears have been expressed that this will end up as a commercial venture but the developers have assured the planners that this not the case. A Condition has been placed on the approval notice stating that permission is for a private dwelling.

An application to build houses behind Barn View on Lichfield Road was refused.

## **3) Local Development Framework (LDF).**

This has been reported on at a number of Parish Council Forums. Put simply the government have introduced a new planning system called the LDF, which entails every planning authority to submit a full plan covering the period from 2010 until 2026. This plan has to include a clear description of the core strategy for the area. This strategy must include the environment, housing needs and sites, economic development, employment sites, infrastructure, town centres, protection of the rural environment and a host of other relevant issues.

At the end of June the Core Strategy will be out for consultation and it is vitally important that residents have their say. The key issue will revolve round the allocation of green field land for housing and commercial development.

The government have announced that they wish to see 3 million additional homes built by 2026. East Staffordshire has been allocated 12900 to be build in this period. After current applications sites will have to be identified to accommodate a net 10,000 new homes. Most of these will be allocated to Burton and Uttoxeter but some will be built in our villages. No decisions have yet been made on land allocation or how many home will be expected in Abbots Bromley. This number will be quite small in comparison with other areas.

## **4) Funding:**

Through the WASL scheme and Community Development Fund the scouts received substantial sum towards repairing the Hut and the Village Hall received a significant grant toward decorating costs and resurfacing the sports floor.

## **5) Bin collection and emptying**

The most significant development for most household has been the introduction of the Blue Bin. We now spend £2.3 million per annum on refuse collection and disposal. Land fill sites are filling up and by 2013 a new "waste to energy plant" will build at Four Ashes on the A5. If nothing is done to reduce wast to land fill or increase recycling council tax WILL have to increase by a huge amount post 2013. Some estimates suggest a staggering £150 per household.

The Blue Bin scheme will reduce operating costs by approximately £450,000 per annum and increase recycling rates. The target for recycling is 55% and the indications after just six weeks are that the figure could be nearer 60%.



## 6) Hot Spots

We are very lucky to live in Abbots Bromley. In Burton and Uttoxeter litter and graffiti are a real problem. The Hot Spot hot line is used by councillors to report any areas of concern and then appropriate action is taken by the Borough or asking other agencies to sort the problem out.

During the year the foot path from Hillcrest through to Radmore Lane has been used by youngsters to graffiti the wall and drop lots of litter. It has been cleaned up twice during the year by ESBC.

## 7) Working with the police

Our local neighbourhood police constable has been very active and we are pleased to support him in his day to day work. Together we introduced the PACT Meetings and can claim some success from these, particularly in highlighting the problems caused by dog fouling, lack of buses, traffic issues and so on. PC Boulter will detail the crime figures in his report. We would encourage residents to attend the PACT Meetings to ensure we keep the parish clean and safe.

## 8) Finally,

Some residents might be interested to note that I have stepped down from the leadership of the Borough Council after 14 years in the "front line". I do intend to continue as the elected member for Bagot ward into the foreseeable future and look forward to have a little more time to walk round the village and take part in more activities.

**Cllr Alex Fox**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2008 at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall, Abbots Bromley, pursuant to notice having been given</b></p>
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Present: Cllr D Eatough (Chairman)  
Julian Allen; Ray Bell; Geoff Catterall; Cllr Phil Charles; Cllr Steve Coxon;  
Bill Douthwaite; Sheila Douthwaite; Neil Eldred; Cllr Alan Elkington; Mrs C  
Gilchrist; Bernard Grundy; Gill Grundy; Ron Hareford; John Hough; Barry  
Joynes; Mike King; Mary Mills; Cllr Roger Mills; Colin Palmer; Liz Palmer;  
Eric Roy; Phillipa Roy; Amanda Shaw; Marilyn Shaw; Paula Stewart; Cllr Mrs  
Caroline Veitch; Cllr Barrie Waring; Ken Webb; Val Webb; Helen Wilson;  
Simon Wilson;

In attendance: PC Richard Boulter; Mrs Sue Buxton – Parish Clerk

Apologies: Enid Ferguson; Len Ferguson; Borough Cllr Alex Fox; Cllr Mrs L Fox;  
Cllr Roger Jarman; Mark Koszak (SCYVS); Jenny Simmonds

### 1. Chairman's Welcome and Report

Cllr David Eatough welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented his report which will be circulated in the final version of the Abbots Bromley Annual Report 2008.

## 2. **Presentation of the Jubilee Cup**

The Chairman invited Helen Wilson and Colin Palmer to receive a certificate commemorating their award of the Jubilee Cup in 2007.

The Chairman presented the Jubilee Cup for 2008 to Ron Hareford, who has been the lollipop man in Abbots Bromley for many years and whose work goes on undeterred by rain, snow, traffic or children!

Mr Hareford accepted the cup and thanked the council for the award and expressed his pride at being a part of the community of Abbots Bromley.

## 3. **Abbots Bromley United Charities**

The accounts of the United Charities were presented by Mr Grundy and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

## 4. **Guest Speaker – PC Richard Boulter**

PC Boulter has been a serving police officer for 14 ½ years and briefly outlined his current role as beat officer for the Bagots Ward, Crown Ward, Leigh and part of the Uttoxeter Rural Ward – a huge geographical area. During the last 6 months he has had a 6-month secondment to immigration, which took him away from his work in and around Abbots Bromley.

He gave a report on various police statistics from a county point of view for the period to April 2007. The county has seen the appointment of a new Chief Constable – Mr Sims and he has brought with him many new ideas. The British Crime Survey shows crime to be down and detections to be up, although detections within the Uttoxeter Local Policing Unit are in fact down.

Anti Social Behaviour is a major area of increased activity, but it is very difficult to define exactly what constitutes anti social behaviour. PC Boulter stressed the importance of residents notifying police of incidents, as without this information, many incidents go unrecorded.

As a beat officer, PC Boulter has no regular additional help, as the area is not recognised as requiring help. If he requires the support of a PCSO he has to borrow one from Barton.

PC Boulter introduced the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meeting, which is to take place at the beginning of June in Abbots Bromley for the Bagots Ward. It is a meeting for residents to raise any issues in Abbots Bromley, which affect them, not just police issues. All ideas discussed at a meeting are put to a vote, and the top three ideas are chosen and someone appropriate is selected from the meeting to go from the meeting and deal with the matter.

## 5. **Open Forum**

The Chairman invited questions from the meeting on any topics relevant to residents within Abbots Bromley:-

- **Crime and ASB** – the statistics may show that there is not a major problem in Abbots Bromley, but to some residents the perception of the situation is very different and there appears to be a real problem. Surely the way forward is to try to prevent such crime in the first place rather than deal with the incidents. It

is vital that residents report incidents to the police so that a complete picture of the problem is built up

- **Refuse Collection** – there seems to be a great deal of congestion and confusion regarding collections, which seem to take place when the village is at its busiest, i.e. first thing in a morning. There has also been an incident where the refuse operator refused to take a brown bin as it contained what appeared to be a plastic bag, even though the resident explained it was a biodegradable bag. Are residents expected to put food waste straight in their bins and if so, does this not encourage rodents. Does paper go in the black bin. There are recycling facilities behind the Crown and other issues need discussion with ESBC
- **Horses** – at the meeting two years ago a great deal of anxiety was expressed regarding horses on the streets in Abbots Bromley. Last week two horses were unsettled in Schoolhouse Lane, resulting in both riders being thrown from the saddles. One rider caught his horse whilst the other made its way back to High Ash Farm. Is there anyway that horse riders can be asked to avoid the village centre and Schoolhouse Lane, particularly when the children are about? It may be possible to discuss these issues with the owner of the stables to see if he can make his clients aware of the problems
- **AB Girls School Cycling Proficiency** – last week the girls were out in the village doing cycling proficiency training, without any warning signs as to what was going on. It would appear some signage and greater supervision is required. It may be necessary to discuss this with the Girls School
- **Village Hall** – the chairman and treasurer are both standing down at the next AGM. A request was made to the parish council to see if they can assist in finding replacements to keep this vital village asset running. The chairman expressed the thanks of everyone to Mr King for his 7 years as chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee
- **Tennis Club** – the club would like a small clubhouse to provide toilets and facilities but are being pushed to put up a £70,000 extension. It was suggested that a presentation be made during the public session of one of the forthcoming parish council meetings. The chairman of the Village Hall informed the meeting that the tennis club had been given permission to use the toilet facilities and the Marcia Rice Room at the Village Hall some two years ago.

## 6. Chairman's Closing Remarks

The chairman thanked all those who had provided written reports and PC Richard Boulter for attending.

He concluded with the following remarks:-

- a hope that the coming year will see the Youth Initiative moving forward in Abbots Bromley after a pleasing start through the work of Cllrs Coxon and Mrs Veitch
- the PACT meeting is a very welcome development and will provide an opportunity for people to get involved in their community
- a hope that Speedwatch can enlist volunteers to begin monitoring again
- a welcome to the new head of Richard Clarke First School, Amanda Shaw
- if anyone is interested in filling the vacancy on the council, please contact the clerk.

There being no other business, the chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.25 pm