

Little Abington Parish Council

Chairman's Report 2016-2017

This year has seen several changes on the parish council. We were very sorry to lose Graham Wigley and Bob Chesham, when they left the village, and Julia Gunning, who resigned due to pressure of work. We were pleased to welcome Kate Scoffings, Sally Simmons (for a second term) and Dennis Lightning.

Highways

This topic is mentioned at most of our meetings, and we have a chance to influence their development in two main ways.

Last year, we reported that the Hildersham junction had been improved, together with a 50 MPH limit on that section of the road, as part of the *Local Highways Initiative*. It's not clear that this is being observed by all users and, sadly, there have been at least 2 serious accidents in that last year. This year, we should see a 50 MPH limit on the section of Newmarket Road between the A1307 and Granta Park, together with Bourn Bridge Road and Pampisford Road up to the 30 MPH limits. A survey of parents showed that most were keen to see standards improved and for crossing the road outside the school to be made safer. We applied for funding for 2017/18 but need further work on a workable proposal to improve safety outside the school.

The A1307 corridor is included in the *Greater Cambridge City Deal*. We responded to some of their public consultations last year. There have also been meetings and consultations about an AgriTech development including work on the A1301/A505, which might impact on the A1307. There is a public exhibition of plans at Hinxton in mid-May.

One aspect of the City Deal is to reduce congestion while recognising that the whole area is subject to significant development. Among other things, this means encouraging the use of buses and bicycles. We were pleased to see the off-road cycle route from Abington to Addenbrookes completed by a new cycleway through the Babraham Institute site. We now have three new cycleways to Abington (from Addenbrookes, Sawston and Whittlesford), all in regular use.

Further improvements along the A1307 corridor are being considered, including park & ride improvements, bus priority measures on the A1307 and a new off-road network of 'Greenways' for walking, cycling and equestrian use. There has been some public consultation already and the details are now being considered by a Local Liaison Forum, which we have joined, with further public consultation in due course.

We used our *Speedwatch* equipment regularly for most of the year, on Bourn Bridge Road, High Street and Cambridge Road. It was clear that most, but not all, drivers behave quite well in the village but speeding is common on Cambridge Road. We passed details to the police. We also used the equipment to check speeds near the school at peak times; we did not see any speeding but did observe some very poor driving and parking. We would welcome further volunteers so we can increase our coverage.

We also investigated whether anything can be done to improve Four Wentways, which acts as an unofficial lorry park. Sadly, this is accompanied by a lot of unpleasant rubbish. We chased up bin emptying a few times but it seems difficult to get much else done to alleviate the parking problem. We had several complaints about traffic going the wrong way when leaving the services and noticed a missing yellow bollard, which was quickly installed after we pointed it out.

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Road flooding can also be a problem. We hope that the occasional floods near the church have now been solved by getting a ditch cleared at Bancroft Park. Some other problems are less easy to fix.

We regularly report minor highways issues; you can also make reports on

https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/xfp/scripts/xforms_form.aspx?formID=25&language=en

Planning

The parish council has two representatives on the Committee for Abington Housing, which was formed to progress some limited housing developments in the village. The first of the three sites identified, at the top of the High Street and along the north side of Pampisford Road, has now started construction and will provide 20 dwellings, including 8 'affordable'. Plans are well advanced for Linton Road, a larger site close to the allotments, and the third, at Bancroft Farm, is a work in progress. An unexpected addition was a private application for 8 dwellings at the old Strawberry Farm, opposite the top of the High Street along the south side of Pampisford Road.

Examination of the District Council's Local Plan has re-started but it's unlikely to conclude until late this year. A point about Local Green Space (LGS) was examined in January, as there had been several objections, including one relating to Bancroft Farm. The District Council was asked to review all its LGS designations and consider whether Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA) might be more appropriate. A more detailed note is available on the parish council web-site: <https://goo.gl/DgFV4i>

Traffic generated by the Cambridge International School is also a concern, especially as it's quite close to Four Wentways. The 50 MPH limit should help but we were expecting developments at the school to improve the traffic flow at the beginning and end of the school day. We heard a little about their plans at our Annual Meeting a year ago but await further information from the school.

Activity has increased at Granta Park, with a new Gilead building and the pending refurbishment of the old one. The bigger project is the new building for Illumina and a new sports centre, which we understand will be open for village residents to join. We have had discussions about an annoying noise which is often heard from parts of Little Abington and continues at night and weekends. It was traced to air-cooling plant for a TWI building and they are attempting to deaden the sound.

Events

The parish councils have arranged or supported a few events over the last year:

- We supported a celebration on Magna Close of the Queen's 90th birthday in June.
- We sponsored a village coach outing to Felixstowe in July.
- We arranged a Village Energy Day at the Abington Institute in October. Representatives from several local companies showed what they could do to improve energy efficiency. We also had representatives from Cambridge Carbon Footprint and Camcycle, the Cambridge Cycling Campaign.

Maintenance and Miscellaneous

We employ a contractor to attend to regular maintenance such as cutting verges, sweeping leaves and bus shelters and keeping footpaths open. Do not forget that it is a landowner's responsibility to keep their hedges and trees trimmed to avoid obstructing footways or street lights. We have had to deal with quite a few fallen trees this year, by chasing owners or, on occasion, taking direct action, with their agreement.

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We have had discussions this year with the owners of Ivan Clark's Corner houses about tidying up their site and hedges. As a result, our contractor has helped them to do this.

The new bus shelter on the A1307 has suffered from a mystery impact, possibly a carelessly reversed trailer. It has been inspected and is quite safe (with one missing glass panel) but we hope to make a claim on our insurance for a repair.

There was a day or two when the river ran blue. We were advised that a registered contractor had discharged an unusually large amount of chemical toilet waste into the Linton treatment works. The Environment Agency and Anglian Water checked and do not think any great harm was done. However, it was alarming and a few dead fish were seen. We were advised that such discharges would be limited to larger treatment works in future, so that they are diluted by the greater volumes. We intend to install signs advising how to report such incidents.

People

We were pleased to submit nominations for the District Council's Community Heroes awards. The second-place of the Outstanding Youth Initiative Award, for work supporting young people, was won by Deborah James for Abington Woods. The winner of the Wellbeing Award was Anne Hall.

Once again, I would like to thank all the parish councillors for their hard work this year, which seems to have been quite busy. Special thanks to the clerk who keeps us all in order and is now complying with the new 'transparency rules' by putting parish council papers on the village website. Her retirement project will be to arrange a better archiving system for the large volume of papers in her garage!

I should note here that I joined the parish council in January 2005 and became chairman in 2008; I think it's probably time for a change, so I do not expect to stand at the election next year.

Peter Brunning, Chairman, Little Abington Parish Council