

Abbey Hill Parish Council
Business Plan 2019-24

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Introduction

This Abbey Hill Parish Council (AHPC) Business Plan, first developed in 2019, sets out the vision for the parish over the coming years. The document illustrates the key priorities over the subsequent five years.

The aim of the document is to explain to parishioners what the parish council does and what it is trying to achieve. While the document is framed over a five-year period, some ambitions will be longer term and some aspects short term.

The document will be formally reviewed annually prior to the Annual Meeting but interim reviews, particularly in the early stages could be as often as quarterly.

The plan highlights both strategic and operational goals and will be used to guide the budget planning process going forward. By developing this framework, it is intended to facilitate a more coordinated and consistent approach to the Parish Council's activities.

The plan was developed having gathered the community's needs through involvement with residents and local organisations. Once published, the plan forms a public document intended to allow the community to understand monitor and contribute to our future goals.

While the plan is a statement of intent, Abbey Hill Parish Council may have to make decisions contrary to the stated intentions if budget constraints, changes to legislation or policy dictate.

The Parish Council will regularly review progress against the plan, the results of which will be fed into future revisions.

Abbey Hill Parish Council

Abbey Hill Parish Council covers the residential area of Two Mile Ash (approx. 5000 residents) as well as the industrial areas of Wymbush and Kiln Farm. Two Mile Ash has two schools (Ashbrook School and Two Mile Ash School), two churches, local parks and play areas, a golf club/course, a Mercure Hotel as well as a Local Centre comprising retail outlets, fish & chip shop, dentist, hairdresser etc.

The Parish Council has five unpaid councillors, who may be elected once every four years. Within this a Chair and Vice Chair are elected once a year. The Parish Council is supported by a part time clerk.

Abbey Hill Parish Council meets once a month on the third Thursday of the month (bar August) at Two Mile Ash School. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, online meetings began in June 2020.

Abbey Hill Parish precept in 2020-21 is £67768, which equates to approximately £46.70 per band D household per year. This is one of the lower precepts in Milton Keynes.

The day to day activities of Abbey Hill Parish Council are published in Agendas and Minutes accessible via the public noticeboard and the AHPC website.

Governance and operation of the Parish Council are described elsewhere, such as in the formally approved Standing Orders document and Code of Conduct document etc. These are available via the AHPC website.

Communication

Abbey Hill Parish Council encourages residents to attend Parish Council Meetings and advertises meeting times on its website and on the Local Centre notice board outside Two Mile Ash School. A short time at the beginning of each meeting is reserved for members of the public.

The Parish Council maintain a website (www.abbeyhillpc.org.uk) where finally approved meeting minutes and other information such as contact details, financial information and audit documents, are made public.

The Parish Council monitor activity on the Friends of Two Mile Ash Facebook page, where invitation to contact the Parish Council is encouraged. The Parish Council also maintains its own Facebook page.

Abbey Hill Parish Council have a Twitter account where relevant information is 'tweeted' @AbbeyHillParish.

Email should be addressed to abbeyhpc@gmail.com.

The email address is monitored by the parish clerk.

STRATEGY STATEMENT

Through short, medium and long term goals (presented in this plan), Abbey Hill Parish Council aims to improve the quality of life for parishioners by ensuring that we have democratic and representative voice for the community, working to liaise with those who provide services within the parish to ensure they are delivered to a high standard and working directly with voluntary organisations and others with the aim of maintaining a pleasant, safe and healthy environment for residents, visitors and local businesses.

Five Year Plan (2019-2024)

Abbey Hill Parish Council propose to set goals over five years as follows, in short, medium and long term categories. It should be noted that Milton Keynes Council are working with a fraction of their original environmental maintenance budget, so action needs to be considered at a parish level.

August 2020 Update:

The originally set goals are in the sections below and over the past year 2019/20, a great deal has been achieved.

Short term goals have been addressed as follows:

With Safety Improvements, the High St parking prevention initiative has been a great success, preventing on-pavement incursions by vehicles and protecting pedestrians.

Additional yellow line proposals are on hold pending further discussion on associated enforcement discussions, but remains of significant interest to the Parish Council. The installation of a post and rail solution to protect the High St horseshoe area was severely delayed due to circumstances beyond our control. However, it was completed in August 2020.

Councillors agreed that for 2020 onwards MKC's proposed 'Third Option' for Landscape Maintenance would be adopted. This facilitated additional maintenance activity by MKC's contractor as per requests by AHPC. This has resulted in additional grass cutting and shrub maintenance (most recently evident on Clay Hill). Furthermore this arrangement provides a seat at Landscape Maintenance progress meetings (attended by our clerk) allowing influence over the programme and urgent issues to be raised through a much closer working arrangement. Communication has been further enhanced by replacement MKC points of contact where major projects are underway (eg V4 works).

A further Post and Rail project in the local centre near Ashbrook School was proposed and although severe delays outside our control mean this is not yet implemented, financial details are now being finalised for work to commence soon.

Environmental issues continue to be reported regularly and recorded on the AHPC Environment log. Interim pothole fixes, footbridge repairs and road white-lining were successfully requested by AHPC.

Progress has been made towards adoption of the TMA Downland playing field by the Parish Council that will allow future consideration of improved facilities.

AHPC's communication strategy review resulted in a decision to completely replace the current website, Development is now under way. Twitter and Facebook will remain key communication media but the new website will be the main hub of Parish Council information.

AHPC continues to support TMEAG projects which deliver environment improvements for the whole community.

AHPC helped set up the Two Mile Ash Community Garden with a group of enthusiastic residents. These volunteers have shown how successful this approach can be. AHPC welcomes such activities and will look for further opportunities.

Revision of coming year priorities remains in a state of flux due to the many delays created by the pandemic. However, the delivery of a programme of post and rail replacement projects forms a significant element, together with the refinement of our now close working relationship on MKC's Landscape Maintenance activity.

With **medium term goals**, Further projects on street signage including redway signs are under active consideration.

Monitoring of Landscaping Services is underway and will continue under the current arrangements until 2023. Improvements in the environment are already evident from this new option.

Consideration of bench replacements in TMA continues and a new bench has been installed recently in the community garden.

Dog bin waste collections continue to be funded and previous issues requiring additional collections at a particularly bad site are now resolved by that change. All dog bins received a sticker to remind users that these are funded by AHPC.

Now that better communication regarding landscape maintenance is in place, consideration of future environmental projects will be facilitated.

Short Term Goals (year 1)

1. Safety Improvements (Local Centre) –
 - i) Expedite Pavement Parking Prevention Initiative along High Street in front of residential properties (**works completed April 2019**)
 - ii) Replace damaged and missing No-Entry signs and One-Way signs in High Street Local Centre (**works completed April 2019**)
 - iii) Investigate Double Yellow Line improvements in High Street to discourage inappropriate parking.
 - iv) Investigate shared Enforcement Officer funding with other parishes.
 - v) Install Ascot Post & Rail Fencing solution for horseshoe area around Christmas tree to prevent inappropriate parking (**funding approved awaiting date for commencement of works**).
2. Continue to negotiate with MKC in developing an operational plan for a Devolved Landscape Maintenance contract. If devolved services are not activated, seek close links with incumbent contractor to allow parish to prioritise maintenance activity.
3. Improve communication with Key Stakeholders at Milton Keynes Council.
4. Devise initial plan and costings for post & rail replacement scheme (Local Centre)
5. Conduct an audit of environmental issues on Two Mile Ash, including:-
 - i. Road name signs, road signs

- ii. Redway Signage improvement across Parish (initial trial at Local Centre)
- iii. Verge & shrub maintenance or replacement
- iv. Road markings
- v. Pot holes

Note: Abbey Hill Parish Council operates an Environment Log where projects and issues are logged and monitored. This is reviewed at each meeting.

- 6. Continue to develop an agreement on a long-term lease with Milton Keynes Council in order to acquire management control of the Downland playing field (allowing improvement of recreational amenity).
- 7. Overhaul Parish Council Communication Strategy covering:-
 - i. Development of a new website
 - ii. Better use of Social Media especially Twitter and Facebook
 - iii. Consider additional Notice Board placement across The Parish
- 8. Deliver future strategy for shrub / border / environmental maintenance). Requires decision on MKC devolved services
- 9. Develop a collaborative relationship Two Mile Ash Environmental Group (TMAEG) to encourage further improvements throughout the parish working in partnership.
- 10. Continue to support local volunteer activities in the parish (such as litter picking).
- 11. Develop a list of training opportunities, to be reviewed annually, that councillors and clerk could exploit to enhance relevant skills.

Medium Term Goals (years 2-3)

1. Environmental improvements at main access points to Two Mile Ash (for example substantial flower or bulb planted areas).
2. Establish options for defective Street Signage (where MKC Highways fail to maintain) – Parish to fund?
3. If agreed, develop and monitor operational plan for Landscaping Services contract.
4. Build relationships with Local Businesses to assist with funding of maintenance in Wymbush and Kiln Farm.
5. Roll out further Redway Signage Improvement projects.
6. Roll out further Park Bench replacement projects
7. Deliver further post & rail replacement schemes as well as a long term plan for maintenance of these across entire estate.
8. Establish a plan of potential verge protection schemes (protection against inappropriate car parking)
9. Review dog waste bin provision to ensure adequate
10. Enhance / replace Christmas Tree lighting

Long Term Goals (years 3-5)

1. Deliver further Post & Rail Replacement schemes across entire estate.
(individual schemes requiring individual decisions as to type of replacement)
2. Deliver Verge Protection Schemes
3. Deliver Verge improvement projects
4. If Downland Field acquired, deliver new amenities as well as improve drainage.
5. Deliver (sponsored) projects funded by local businesses

Plan Approval

This Plan is approved by _____ S Galbraith___ Chair

_____ D Simpson___ Vice Chair

Date: 17/09/2020

Minute reference _____2020-09 item 5

<i>Version History</i>		
<i>Version 1</i>	<i>adopted</i>	<i>May 2019</i>
<i>Version 2</i>	<i>adopted</i>	<i>17 September 2020</i>