



Abbotsley Village Plan



June 2008

ABBOTSLEY PARISH PLAN 2008

Dear Parishioner,

The Parish Council initiated the Parish Planning process at the end of 2006 and has adopted the Plan and its Action Plan as policy. The Action Plan document will be used to give direction to Parish Council decisions and recommendations in years to come. They will be used as evidence when trying to influence bodies outside the parish that may be making decisions that affect Abbotsley, for example Huntingdonshire District Council or even the County Council.

The information presented in this report is based on a questionnaire distributed to every household in Abbotsley in July 2007 and the analysis of the information identifying key issues reflects the views of over 90% of the households who returned the completed the questionnaire.

The plan was produced thanks to a grant of £1500 received from Cambridgeshire Acre (Action with Communities in Rural England) and a grant from Abbotsley Parish Council of £500. I would like to thank members of the Parish Council for their support in this project, Acre especially Stan Rees and Alan Hampton for their guidance in identifying the key objectives and to every member of the Steering Committee who have given generously of their time and expertise to produce this Plan.

Finally, a thank you to all the residents of Abbotsley who completed the questionnaire and participated in the consultation meetings prior to the completion of the questionnaire.

On behalf of the Steering Committee:

Howard Thomas, Chairman
Julie Wisson
Jacky Davis
Heather Adlam
Simon Adlam
Larry Fitch
Ivan Quince
Julian Dell
Fraser Nesbitt



Jonathan Djanogly MP
Member of Parliament for Huntingdon
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

7 March 2008

Dear Mr Thomas,

I was delighted to hear of the Village Plan being put together by the people of Abbotsley. There has been an excellent response to the questionnaire which highlights the togetherness of the village and the sense of community that exists there. Abbotsley is a peaceful and charming parish and I look forward to the Scarecrow Festival each year!

I hope that the village is able to meet the goals established in the plan as additional amenities would be pleasing for the residents as would further clubs and societies. I wish the Abbotsley Village Plan every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

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VILLAGE INFORMATION

The picturesque village of Abbotsley is dominated by the church of Saint Mary of Antioch which has stood on the hill in the centre of the village since 1138. The tower of the Church is unusual in that at each corner of the tower stand four figures that are believed to represent Kings Macbeth, Malcolm, Harold and William. On the altar of the Church is a Flemish painting of the Magi dating from the 16th century. The surrounding countryside consists of mainly arable farmland.



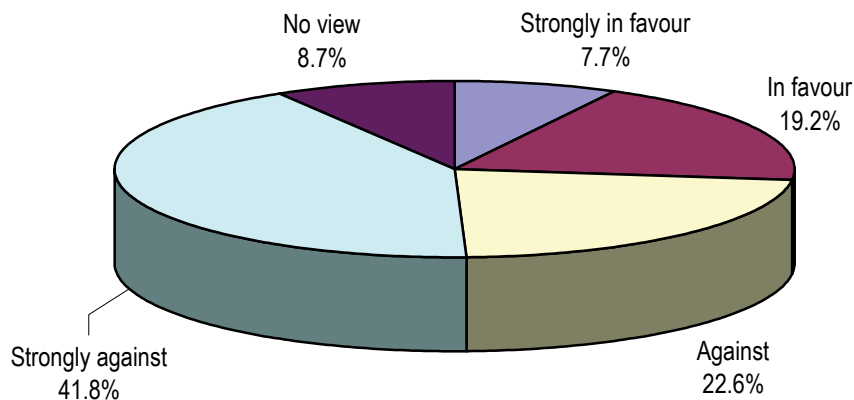
For clarity, the responses are given in percentage terms based on the total number of answers given to each question.

BUSINESS/EMPLOYMENT

Approximately 47% of the residents of Abbotsley were either employed full time, part time or self employed. Most worked in the local area or within 20 miles of the village.

23.3% were retired and 23.6% were in full time education. Surprisingly the majority of the respondents (66%), a result in contrast to other villages, were against the development of new employment opportunities in and around the village.

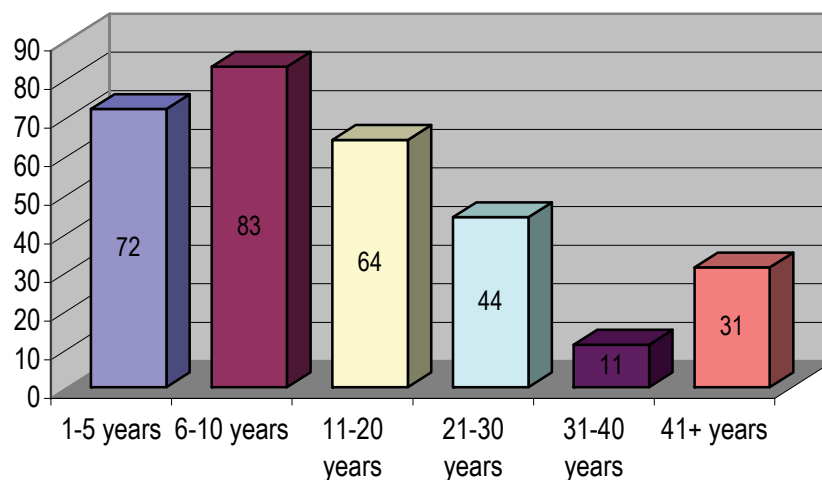
Figure 1.0: Are you in favour of business development?



HOUSING

- A large number of residents (28%) have lived in the village for over twenty years and another 20% have been resident for between 11 and 20 years. 23.6% have moved into the village within the last 6 years. Almost 89% of the properties in the village are owner occupied.
- The majority of the residents (80%) were not in favour extending the village envelope for the development of new housing. However if development did occur 49% wanted to see it limited to no more than 10% of the number of existing dwellings i.e. not more than 14 dwellings and that the majority of these should be one or two bedroomed properties.

Figure 2.0 : Length of time lived in the village



TRANSPORT

- Vehicle Use
- Cars are the main form of transport for the majority of residents.
- Only a few residents use the local bus services on a daily or weekly basis so assessing the quality of the services from this survey is not possible.
- However 11-14 residents use the train regularly and in view of the difficulties of parking at the station the question needs to be asked as to why buses, particularly at peak times, do not stop at the station en route to St.Neots.

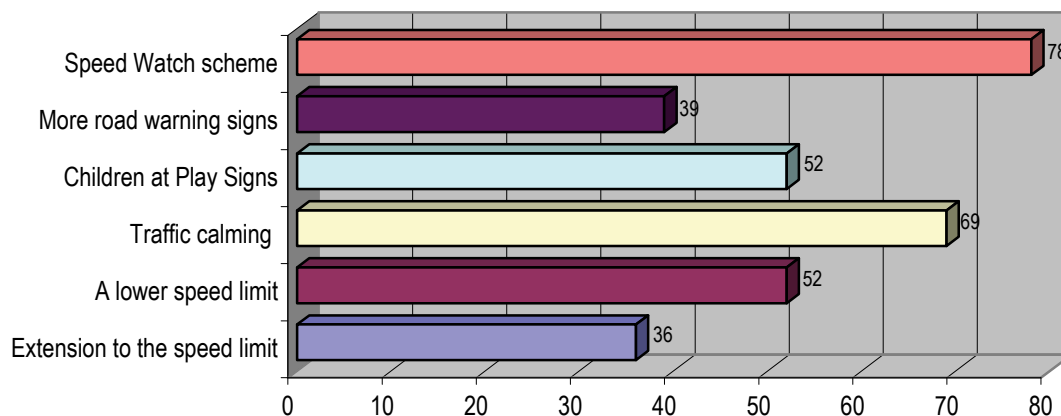
PARKING

- Parked cars in New Row/High Street appear to be a concern especially as the bend in the road obscures on coming traffic. How this issue can be resolved is unclear because off road parking does not appear possible except at the rear of these properties.

SPEED CONTROL

- Speeding through the village is a major problem especially as the long straight approaches to the village do not encourage speed reduction on entering the village. The current Speed Reduction Flashing Signs do not appear to be effective in achieving their purpose.

**Figure 3.0 : Speed reduction measures
Favoured Options**

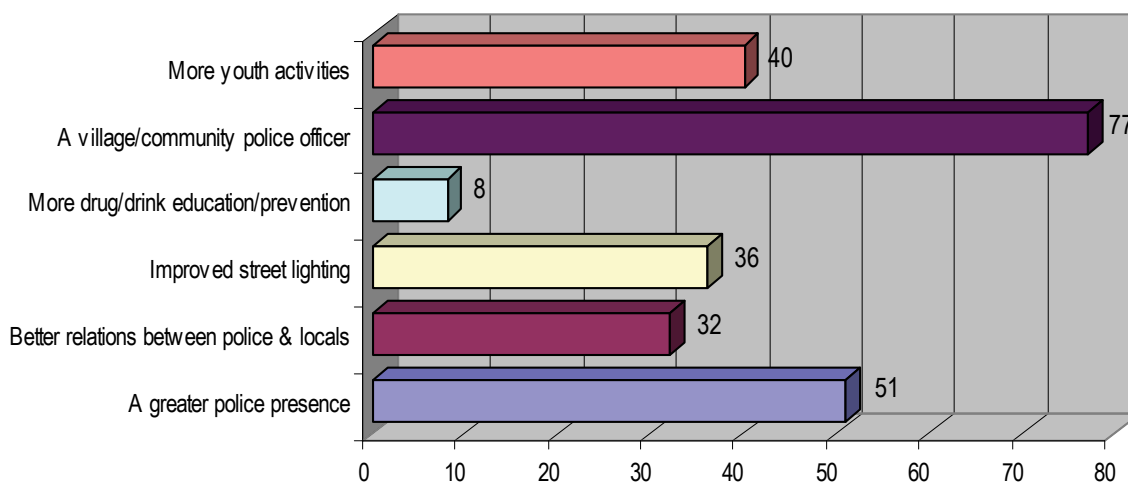


- A Speed Watch scheme was the most favoured speed reduction measure but this scheme we have been informed is not operational in Cambridgeshire at the moment. Traffic calming measures the second favoured option apparently cannot be implemented in Abbotsley because the road through the village is a designated wide/high load route.

POLICING /CRIME

- 50.4% of residents were concerned about theft from gardens/out buildings and a further 24% about theft from houses. Thankfully drug/alcohol/abuse crimes were rare.
- Policing or lack of it is a major issue. The majority of residents would like to see a greater police presence preferably in the form of a village /community Police officer. A visible police presence is seen by many residents as a deterrent to the increasing problem of theft, cold calling and rogue traders.

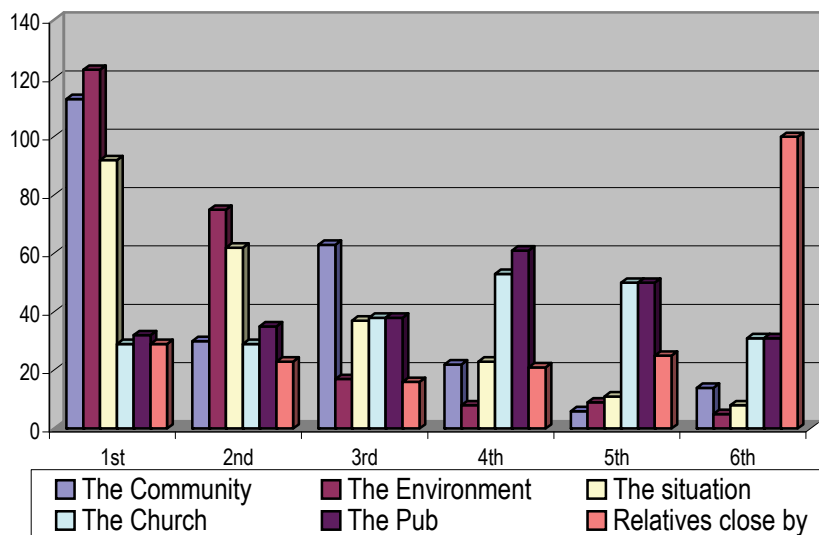
Figure 4.0 : The following is needed to reduce crime



ENVIRONMENT

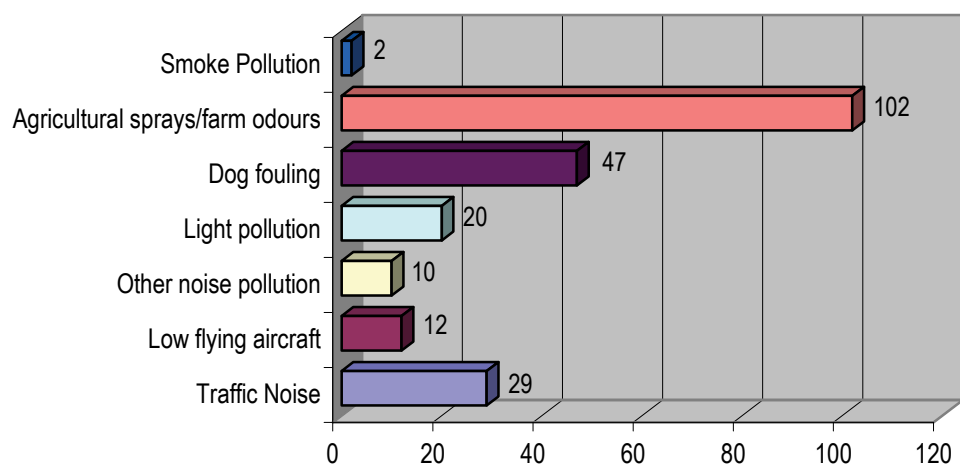
- The environment was rated as the most important factor about living in Abbotsley so there were strong feelings expressed regarding the foul odours emanating from one farm in the village. A meeting has already been held to discuss this issue and hopefully this issue will not impact on the quality of life of villagers in the future. The position will be monitored on a regular basis.

Figure 5.0: Ranking of the most important reasons for living in Abbotsley



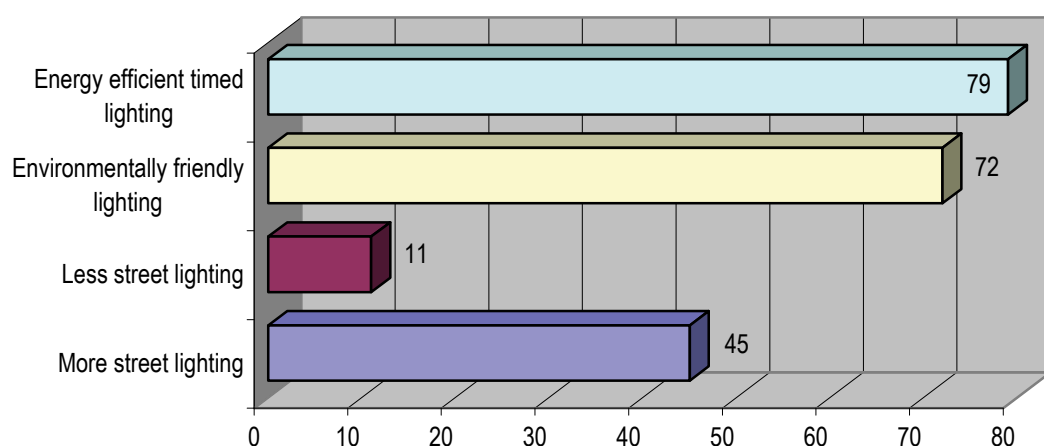
- Dog fouling is still a major issue according to 72% of respondents and the survey highlighted the playing fields, around the village green and Blacksmiths Lane as being areas where dog bins/bags should be provided.

Figure 6.0 : Do you suffer from any of the following?



- It is recognised that the street lighting in the village is inadequate and indeed a number of respondents believe an improvement will lead to a reduction in theft from gardens and outbuildings. However only 36% would like to see more lighting in the village but a majority would like to see the current system replaced by a more energy efficient and environmentally friendly system.

Figure 7.0 : Would you like to see any of the following in the village?

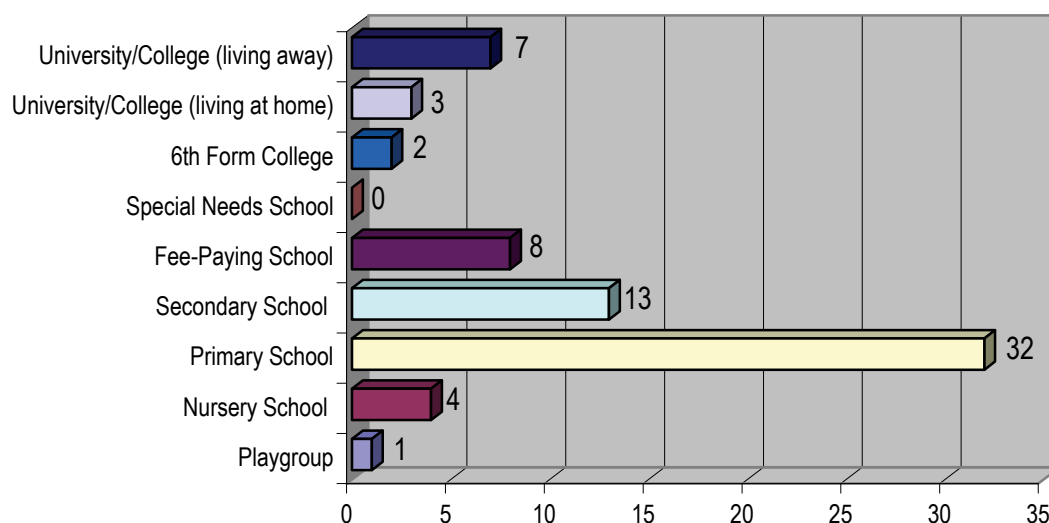


- Whilst overall the maintenance and condition of roadways, footpaths and verges were considered satisfactory by over 60% of respondents concerns were expressed about certain areas in the village especially verges which needed attention.
- 36% of respondents felt they could not walk, cycle or horse-ride safely through the parish.
- The majority of households would like to see more tree planting and wild areas especially tree planting on the approaches to the village around the playing fields and on the village green.

HEALTH / EDUCATION

- Most residents appear satisfied with the provision of local health care services and found no difficulty in getting to and from these services.
- Compared to many other villages we are fortunate in having a much higher number of children (34 families) under the age of 18.
- This survey highlighted the nationwide problem of school catchment areas. 25 out of the 34 families with children were not satisfied with the current school catchment areas.

Figure 8.0 : Type of education attended



Base : 70 children

- The preferred choice for primary education was the Barnabas Oley School and for Secondary education the preferred choice was Comberton followed by Longsands.

YOUTH

- As expected all respondents with children wanted to see the provision of more facilities for the youth of the parish. Over the next few years there will be over 50 young people in the village and planning for their needs should be a priority.

RECREATION / LEISURE

- The two major facilities in the village are used occasionally/never used by the majority on the villagers, Only a small number of residents (23%) use the Village Hall on a monthly basis and a slightly higher number (40%) use the playing fields on a regular daily, weekly or monthly basis so the survey raises the question as to whether these facilities adequately serve the need of residents.

Figure 9.0 Frequency of use of playing field

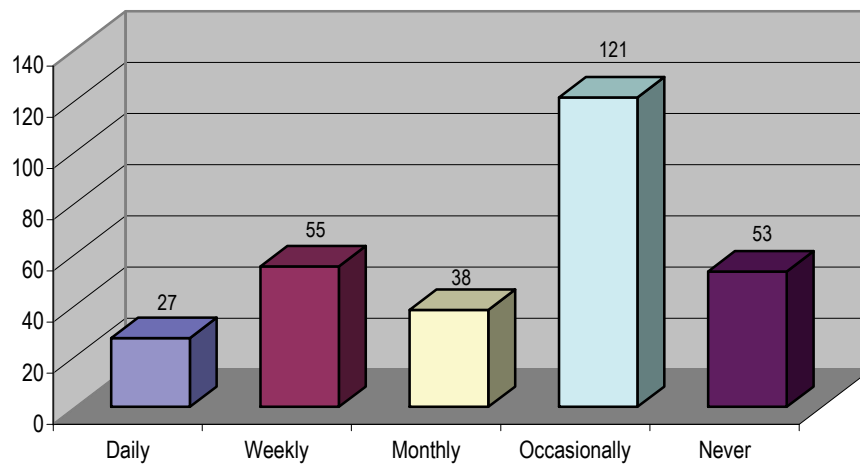
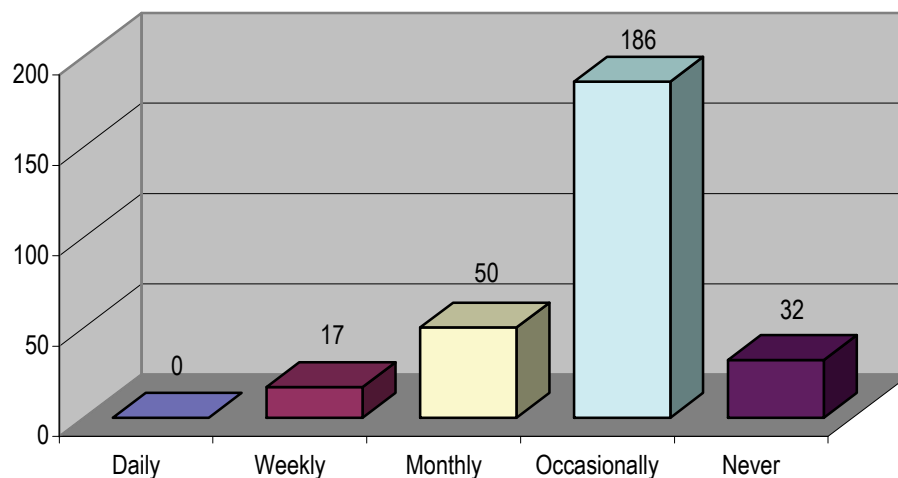
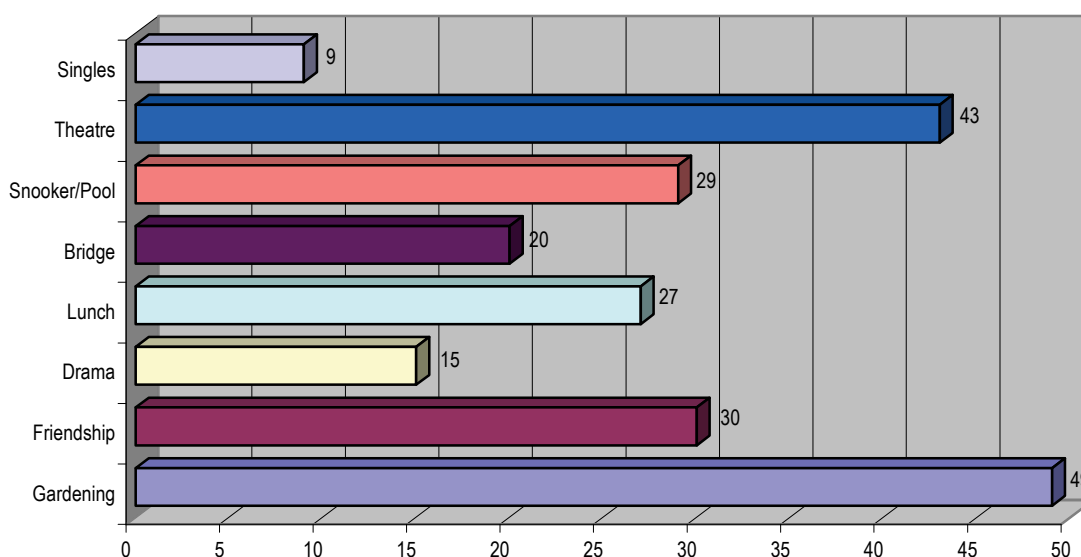


Figure 10.0 Frequency of use of Village Hall



- Many residents are interested in joining a village/ local club with theatre and gardening being the most popular and with friendship, bridge and snooker clubs close behind. The steering committee will bring interested parties together.

Figure 11.0 Interested in forming new clubs and societies



PARISH COUNCIL

83% of villagers were aware that the Parish Council held meetings on the first Tuesday of every month and they were welcome to attend.

BOUNDARY CHANGES

Just over half of the households questioned (53%) were aware of the proposal to merge the Spinney ward of Eynesbury Hardwick and St Neots Rural Parish into the Parish of Abbotsley.

CHURCH

Whilst a large number of villagers considered the Church as a focal point of the community and of great historical interest, the number of regular worshippers is only 71 out of a population of around 450.

To most villagers the Church's importance is confined to special events such as funerals, wedding and baptisms.

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

This is a great village to live in and your time and efforts are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

We feel that there are too many people stuck in the past and who fear change. We hope that residents of Abbotsley will see that this is great village that needs to be brought up to date. More houses, more facilities. There are so many young people in this village we need to act now before they also leave.

The wonderful thing about Abbotsley is the fantastic community spirit which celebrates with you in times of joy and supports in time of crisis. There is always help if needed, freely offered. I love living in Abbotsley. That is why I moved here and why I have stayed here. I would hate to see any change eg a big increase in population or building that would cause damage to this wonderful community that we are privileged to live in.

A youth club activity does not have to always be organised activities but could just be a place for elder kids to "hangout" in a controlled environment with a small adult presence.

We desperately need a village bus service that not only goes to St Neots but also goes to and from the Railway Station for commuters and others wishing to travel by train. Cars could then be left at home.

Blacksmiths Lane is not wide enough for two cars, let alone lorries. It could be made one way which would eliminate the appalling cutting up of verges.

The public footpath in Harbins Lane is often unusable and needs to be better maintained by the landowner.

ISSUES	AIM/ACTION	PRIORITY	PARTNERS	RESOURCE	PLANNING
Speeding in the village	Parish Council to explore calming options. Speed watch?	HIGH	Parish Council HDD/CCC	Clerks time, cost of calming measures	
Improved street lighting	Identify where	MEDIUM	Parish Council HDD/CCC	Approx £2000 pa be set aside in Parish Budget for these phased improvements	
Improved Police visibility	Contact Police to discuss	MEDIUM	Parish Council, HDD, Community Safety Partnership	Clerks time	
Village Hall Improvements	Update facilities	MEDIUM	Parish Council, Village Hall Committee, Cambs Acre, Village Hall Liaison Officer	Costings to be determined	
New general purpose facility	Determine if there is a need	MEDIUM	Parish Council, New committee to establish feasibility	Time	
Nuisances, Noise, Smells	Monitor position every 6 months	STARTED	Parish Council, HDC Officials	None	Action taken by Parish Council
Tree planting, Wildlife areas	Identify suitable sites	MEDIUM	Parish Council, HDD/CCC, Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust	Minimal	
Dog Fouling	Identify sites for bins or bags	HIGH	Parish Council, HDC	Unknown	Action taken by Parish Council
Public Transport	Contact Bus company, Schedules and feasibility of peak service to station	MEDIUM-	Parish Council	None	No
Leisure Facilities	Meeting of villagers to determine interest	MEDIUM	Village Plan Committee	None	NO
Youth Facilities	Meeting of interested young people and parents	ASAP	Village Plan Committee		
Catchment area for local schools	Meeting with Senior Staff at County Education Department to discuss policy	ASAP	Representatives of parents involved		
Village Website	Content of site	ASAP	Parish Council, J Wilson		Action regarding site – www.abbotsleyvillage.co.uk