

ARNCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL OPEN MEETING – TUESDAY MAY 7th 2019

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this open meeting and thank you for attending. Towards the end of the meeting there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions.

THE PARISH COUNCILLORS

Your parish council consists of seven councillors. My name is Paul Wilson and I am the current parish council chairman. The other six councillors are Lee Savidge who is our vice chairman, Martin Byrne, Adrian Doore, Peter Barnard, Andy Poppitt and Linda Hooper. All of your councillors live in our village.

Councillors attend parish council meetings whenever they can but it is not always possible for all councillors to attend every meeting. However, I can report that every parish council meeting since May 2018 has been quorate.

Your councillors are volunteers and do work for our parish free of charge. No expenses or allowances have been paid to any councillor during the last twelve months despite all councillors being legally entitled to claim a financial allowance for the work that they do.

On behalf of our village, I'll say many thanks to all of my council colleagues for volunteering to be a member of the parish council in the first place and also for the contributions that they make towards the running of the council. Several extra thankyou's from me to Lee for putting up with me ringing him quite often during office hours and for somehow managing to find time-out from his day job during the week to squeeze in a lot of parish work.

Thanks are also due to both our county councillor, Dan Sames and our district councillor, David Hughes for their help and advice. Dan and David attend our monthly meeting whenever it is possible for them to do so.

THE PARISH CLERK

Our parish clerk is Mrs Anne Davies. Anne has been our clerk for many years and her role is very important. She does our book keeping, maintains the financial records required for audit purposes and deals with the necessary clerical work.

Anne also provides the council with objective and independent advice regarding procedural, legal and financial matters. Her advice and guidance is always much appreciated and everyone in our village benefits from her experience and know-how.

Anne issues the minutes of every monthly meeting. The minutes are available for viewing on the parish council website and can be downloaded as a PDF. You can also request a paper copy.

On behalf of us all, I would like to say thank you very much to Anne for all of the work that she does.

SO WHAT DOES THE PARISH COUNCIL DO ?

Your parish council tries its best to ;

- 1) Make reasoned and balanced decisions on behalf of our community.
- 2) Ensure that parish money is used wisely.
- 3) Help with parishioners' problems and concerns where those are within our remit.
- 4) Liaise with the authorities to try and get projects, repairs and necessary work carried out.
- 5) Ensure that the views and feelings of our parishioners are made known to the appropriate authorities and organisations.

Parish council work is done on a part time basis on many days throughout each month and has to be done in preparation for the monthly meeting. Councillors have to find time during office hours to make and receive phone calls – not always easy to do. Evenings can be busy as emails about parish business need to be read, written, replied to and sent. Research and planning often needs doing before questions can be answered, decisions can be made or village projects can begin. It is sometimes necessary to meet with people from the authorities and other businesses to discuss parish issues and projects.

WORK AND PROJECTS

Ownership of our village infrastructure is varied so the responsibility as to who should resolve village issues is also varied. The parish council tries hard to take care of its responsibilities in good time whenever possible. Problems with roads, speeding, pavements and kerbs, manholes, street lights etc. require action to be taken by our local authorities, the police or the MOD.

The parish council maintains a liaison with the MOD and both our district and county councillors to ensure that they are aware of our problems and concerns and to ask them for their help and advice as necessary.

Work done over the last twelve months

- a) Phase one of the additional parking provision in Woodpiece Road has been done. CDC have not yet given a start date for phase two.
- b) The new road build-out next to the Village Close entrance has been constructed. That was paid for using the grant money that was held by OCC.
- c) The new oak bench on the playing field was installed. That was paid for using grant money that was held by CDC.
- d) Concrete bollards were installed along the front of the playing field to stop vehicles driving onto the football pitch.
- e) New concrete bases and seats have been installed at the front of the playing field.
- f) The bench seat near to the village pond was repaired.
- g) Three extra dog poo bins were installed giving a total of nine bins throughout the village.
- h) Some pot holes in our roads were filled in and some street lights were repaired.
- i) OCC renewed the road markings along the Ploughley Road in Lower Arccott. They then resurfaced that piece of road and had to renew the road marking again.
- j) Finally, a major success. After moaning a lot and sending numerous emails, Lee's tenacity eventually paid off. Sanctuary Housing actually made arrangements to get a new drain cover installed in Buchanan Court to replace the one stolen in November 2017. It was fitted on 12th February this year. It took fifteen months to get this done.

Work still to be done

- a) Getting other potholes in our roads filled in and other non-working street lights to work.
- b) Getting the goalposts reinstalled onto the football pitch
- c) Getting an audio system installed into the village hall
- d) Trying to get an additional changing room / storage room facility built next to the village hall
- e) Investigating vehicle activated speed signs being installed at each end of the village
- f) Adding a few more play items into the village hall play area for the toddlers and also getting suitable play equipment installed for the older children / teenagers.
- g) Providing additional parking provision by the village hall
- h) Replacement of the rotten wooden posts on the village green next to Green Lane.

PARISH FINANCE AND FUNDING

Day to day funding required for parish expenditure is mainly financed from the precept money received from CDC each year. The precept money comes from a small allocation taken from everyone's council tax and, for 2019 / 2020, the precept amount is £16,000. Your precept money pays for many things. Examples are insurance renewals, playground inspections, emptying of the litter and dog poo bins, general repairs, clerical costs, maintenance of trees and hedges and the grass cutting of the open green spaces and roadside verges that the parish council is responsible for.

Projects are paid for from available grant funding and / or from money held in the parish reserves.

The parish finances are externally audited on an annual basis and the financial report compiled by our parish clerk shows in detail where your money is spent. You can see the report should you wish to do so.

COMMUNITY

Where possible, the parish council will provide help for community projects and initiatives. To successfully run a community project, support and involvement is needed from volunteers within our community. The parish council is not in a position to take on and run community projects by itself. If you would like to volunteer to help out with a community project then please let the parish council know.

If you have an idea for a community project it is possible that funding may be available. Send details of your idea into the parish council via email or letter or speak with any parish councilor.

The parish council often receives information about acts of anti-social behaviour within our village. Vandalism, trespass, fire lighting, drug use and dog fouling are typical acts of the unwanted behaviours reported. Please note that the parish council has no legal power whatsoever to deal with any of these issues. Anyone who witnesses these types of behaviours taking place should report them to the relevant authority – preferably with photographic and / or video evidence.

It's worth mentioning that the cost of repairing any damage to parish property comes from your precept money. If that money has to be spent on repairs then it is no longer available to be spent on something more worthwhile.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mention must also be made about the people who have been involved with the Village Hall Management Committee and the Arncott Community Association. Without their brilliant efforts there would be no community organisations or community events. Few people, if any, will be aware of the hard work that these volunteers put in behind the scenes so, on behalf of the parish council and everyone else, I would like to say a huge thank you to all of them.

Thank you very much.

Paul Wilson
Chairman
Arncott Parish Council
7th May 2019