

ARNCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL OPEN MEETING – TUESDAY MAY 24th 2022

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 should you wish to do so.

ARNCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

Arncott Parish Council currently consists of its permitted quota of seven councillors. For those of you who don't know who we are, my name is Paul Wilson and I am the current parish council chairman. The other six councillors are Martin Byrne who is our vice chairman, Lee Savidge, Paul Hooper, Luke Collins, Danny Cooper and Alex Dean.

Our parish councillors are volunteers who give their time for free and do their best to carry out the work and business that is necessary for our parish to function as needed. No expenses or financial allowances have been paid to any councillor during the last twelve months.

Parish councillors come and go and during the last 12 months, Russell Todd and Linda Hooper have had personal reasons to step down from their positions as members of the council. I would like to say a big thank you to both of them for the help and contributions they made as councillors. Linda has since gone on to join the committees of both the VHMC and the ACA to give them her help and assistance. It's never very easy to find willing replacements for outgoing parish councillors so I am very thankful indeed that Danny, Luke and Alex volunteered to join the council and fill the vacant seats.

The parish councillors endeavour to ;

- 1) Make reasoned and balanced decisions on behalf of our parish and our community.
- 2) Ensure that parish money is used wisely and only where necessary.
- 3) Help with and try to resolve parishioners' problems and concerns where those are within our remit.
- 4) Liaise with the utility companies, the county, district, police and MOD authorities to try and get projects, repairs and any other necessary work done that is needed within the parish.
- 5) Ensure that the views and feelings of our parishioners are made known to the various authorities and organisations as appropriate.

Together, the council members provide a wide range of skillsets that get used for the benefit of our parish and our residents. Where possible, Martin, Paul and Danny generally take care of the necessary electrical and maintenance type of work needed at and around the village hall along with other bits and pieces that need sorting out within the village. If they can, they do this work for free which means money from parish funds does not have to be used. Along with our clerk – Anne Davies - Luke helps us out with parish legal business. Alex only joined the council at the beginning of this month and he will no doubt become another valued asset for us as he gets to learn about parish business. Last but not least, my gratitude and many grateful thanks go to Lee for always being available as my sounding board for help and advice. Lee deals with issues regarding IT, roads, pavements, streetlights, police liaison etc. and discussion with the authorities about those issues often has to be done during normal daytime office hours. Lee thankfully somehow manages to fit that work into his own busy daytime schedule. I do firmly believe that we currently have a very good team of people on our council who have the interests of our parish at heart and my grateful thanks go to each of you for the time and effort that you have given and continue to give.

THE PARISH CLERK

Mrs Anne Davies is our parish clerk and Anne looks after our book keeping, maintains financial records and manages much of the necessary clerical work. Anne also provides the council with objective and independent advice regarding procedural, legal and financial matters and that advice is always much appreciated. Our parish benefits from her experience and know-how so, on behalf of us all, I would like to say thank you very much Anne for all of the work that you do on our the behalf.

PARISH FINANCE AND FUNDING

Parish expenditure is mainly financed from the precept money received from CDC each year. That precept money comes from a small allocation taken from the council tax that is paid by our village residents. That

money is used to fund the parish's normal standard bills i.e. insurances, playground inspections, emptying of litter and dog poo bins, general repairs, some replacement items, clerical costs, tree and hedgerow maintenance and grass cutting of the open green spaces and roadside verges that belong to the parish. Projects are generally 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 Anne shows in detail where and how parish funds are spent. A copy of the report is available on request.

WORK AND PROJECTS

Ownership of our village infrastructure is varied and so the responsibility as to who should resolve village infrastructure issues is also varied. The parish council does its best to take care of its responsibilities in good time whenever possible. Issues regarding speeding, roads, pavements, kerbs, manholes, street lights, electricity supply, water leaks etc. require action to be taken by our local authorities, utility companies, the police or the MOD. The council maintains a liaison with our district and county councillors, the police and the MOD and their help and advice is asked for as and when needed. Utility companies are contacted when necessary.

Despite the difficulties with having to work within the Covid19 restrictions, several major projects have been completed during the last couple of years. The research, planning, organising and liaison that is always necessary for project work to be realised is very time consuming and is done on a part time basis. I would like to thank the members – past and present - of both the parish council and the village hall management committee for their input and contributions. Since the beginning of 2020 ;

- a) New oak posts have been installed on the village green adjacent to Green Lane
- b) A vehicle activated speed sign has been installed on Murcott Road
- c) A new outdoor gym facility has been installed at the playing field
- d) The village hall play area has been upgraded and refurbished
- e) A new car park, footpaths and a patio area have been constructed next to the village hall
- f) Concrete bollards and removable steel tube barriers have been installed adjacent to the village hall to prevent unauthorised vehicle access onto the playing field
- g) Concrete bollards have been installed at the village green car park to prevent vehicle access onto the village green.
- h) Repairs have been done to the corner verges of Woodpiece Road and Buchanan Road
- i) New village notice boards have been installed
- j) New suspended ceilings have been installed in the village hall toilet areas.
- k) New LED lighting has been installed into both the village hall and toilet area ceilings.
- l) New emergency exit lighting has been installed in the village hall.
- m) The village hall toilet and lobby areas have been decorated.
- n) A purchase order to renew the main floor in the village hall will be issued imminently.

Ongoing project work relates to ;

- a) The widening of the Green Lane road adjacent to the village green together with the repair and reinforcement of that section of road verge. There are current issues regarding quotation costs, timings / scheduling / contractor are these are still to be resolved.
- b) Arranging for a suitable additional changing room / storage room facility to be installed / constructed next to the village hall. A project engineer will need to be found to oversee this project.
- c) Deciding what is work required for the refurbishment of the existing village hall changing room. Costs will need to be established and decisions made as to who will do the work.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Wherever possible, the parish council will provide advice and, if feasible, financial help for community projects and initiatives. The parish council is not in a position to take on and run community projects by itself so crucial support and involvement would be needed from volunteers.

Community involvement within our parish is always wanted and is a good aim to have although it's not so easy to get. Thankfully there are a few recent examples where several members of our community have stepped forward to help out when needed.

At the outbreak of Covid19, Heike Mackenzie, Charlene White and Peter Forrest put together the village's Covid19 support group and offered their help to those in need. Jan, Spencer and their family provided us all with a fruit and veg service and they often went out of their way to make home deliveries where necessary.

Thomas and his family worked hard to ensure that provisions were available at their One Stop shop. Other villagers stepped up to help those who couldn't go out or had to self-isolate.

In June of last year we asked if there was anyone in the village who would be willing to take on the maintenance of the flower borders at the village War Memorial garden. Within a very short space of time an offer of help was received and the garden borders were very soon back in shape and flourishing thanks to the excellent work put in by Kaye Forrest, Jacqueline Carpenter and Rosemary Gaskins. Those ladies are carrying on with that work and the results of their continuing efforts are clear for all to see. The team has asked for its grateful thanks to be passed on to Danny Cooper and Stuart Fletcher for the work that they did in putting in the new garden border edging and also to Richard Milliken-Smith at Print Run for continuing to provide the team with a free water supply for the plants in the garden borders.

On the downside, the parish council quite often gets to learn about senseless acts of vandalism and anti-social behaviour that happen within our village. It's worth mentioning that the cost of repairing any damage to property belonging to our parish comes from the precept money paid by the village residents. If that money has to be spent on repairs then it is no longer available to spend on something more worthwhile. The parish council has no legal power to deal with such issues so anyone who witnesses vandalism and / or anti-social behaviour taking place should report it to the police – preferably with photographic and / or video evidence.

FOOTBALL CLUBS

Last season began with two village clubs - Arncott AFC and Arncott Athletic FC. Unfortunately Arncott AFC had to withdraw from the league and cup competitions part way through the season. The good news is that Arncott Athletic FC will be competing again in the Banbury & District Lord Jersey League for the coming season so I wish the club all the best.

PALMER AVENUE TRAFFIC SPEED

The issue of extending the 30mph speed limit zone further along Palmer Avenue is still ongoing with OCC. Our County Councillor – Calum Miller – has been asked to keep on raising the matter with the OCC highways department and it is to be hoped that OCC will soon see sense and agree to extend the speed limit zone such that the zone includes the residencies and the MOD fire station alongside of the Palmer Avenue road.

AVHMC & ACA

Many grateful thanks must go to the ladies who volunteer to make up the AVHMC and the ACA. Without them there would be no-one to manage the running of the village hall, community organisations or community events. For most of the last two years, Covid19 rules and regulations have presented massive challenges regarding the usage of the village hall I am very well aware of how much hard work was put in by the VHMC, and in particular, from Wendy, Christine and Jo, to ensure that compliance to the rules was met. The majority of people will be totally unaware of the hard work that gets done behind the scenes by the VHMC and the ACA ladies so, on behalf of the parish council and everyone else, I would like to say a massive thank you to all of them.

DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Prior to the district council elections that were held earlier this month, David Hughes had served as our district councillor for many years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all of the work that he did on behalf of our parish together with the help and advice that he gave to us. I wish David well for the future.

I would also like to say thank you very much to our county councillor - Calum Miller - for his help, advice and involvement with some of our parish issues since he became our county councillor in May of last year.

Thank you very much.

Paul Wilson
Chairman
Arncott Parish Council
24th May 2022