

ARNCOTT PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL OPEN MEETING – TUESDAY MAY 7th 2024

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. 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, Paul Hooper, Alex Dean, Luke Collins, Danny Cooper and Dinesh Patel.

Parish council meetings are convened four times per annum. Meetings are held in the Arncott village hall on the first Tuesday evening of the months of January, May, July and October and commence at 7:30pm. Additional meetings can be convened as and when necessary. The village's annual open meeting is also held in the village hall during the month of May.

All of your parish councillors are residents of Arncott village and are volunteers who give their time for free. They 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.

As a parish council we always 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) Try and help 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.

I believe that we have a good and caring team of people on our council with a valuable mix of skillsets and that those people have the interests of our parish at heart. On many occasions work that needs doing in and around the village hall and within the village gets taken care of by one or more of our councillors. If possible, the work gets done for free which means money from parish funds does not have to be used. On behalf of myself and our village community I'd like to say many grateful thanks to all of our councillors for the time and effort that they have given and continue to give on behalf of our parish.

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 parish 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 year which comes 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, inspections, emptying of litter and dog poo bins, general repairs, 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.

INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS AND REPAIRS

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 as and when necessary.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY

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

Community involvement within our parish is always welcomed and appreciated although it's not always an easy thing to get. There has not been a village fete since 2022 due to a lack of people volunteering to become involved with helping and organising a fete. Last year's family Christmas Carol service was very poorly attended.

On the upside, there were several successful events such as last year's Halloween party, the children's Christmas party, the senior citizen's Christmas dinner and this year's Valentine's Day dinner. This success was due to the hard work put in by the ladies who make up the AVHMC and ACA committees together with a few of our village residents. Rebecca Chatterley and her team of parents put on a brilliant Christmas party for the children with Dave Nixon as Father Christmas for a few hours. Gwen McEwan and her brilliant team of helpers cooked and served up the senior citizen's and Valentine's Day dinners.

Grateful thanks have go to our gardening ladies - Kaye Forrest, Jacqueline Carpenter and Rosemary Gaskins – for their continued work and efforts in maintaining the flower borders around the village War Memorial garden. Those garden borders have been transformed as result of their excellent work and the results are clearly on show for us all to see.

Many thanks go to the proprietor of Print Run - Mr Richard Milliken-Smith. Richard continues to support the upkeep of the Memorial Garden borders as he willingly allows Kaye, Jacqueline and Rosemary to give all of the plants a drink by using his water supply. Richard has also very kindly purchased a garden bench for the benefit of our community. The bench will be sited on the village green next to the Memorial Garden and will provide seating for people to sit on should they wish to do so.

As is usual, I would again like to offer a massive thank you to Fred Milloy. For many years, Fred has been an enormous help in the effort to keep our village tidy. Fred can often be seen walking around the village with a big black sack and his litter grabber picking up the rubbish discarded by inconsiderate people. The vast majority of our village residents are probably not aware of what Fred does but it would soon become very obvious if Fred didn't do what he does. Our village is a much tidier place than it would be without his efforts so, again, many grateful thanks Fred.

I will offer my apologies to anyone that I have omitted who would be worthy of a mention.

It's unfortunate that 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.

ARNCOTT ATHLETIC F.C.

Our village football club - Arncott Athletic FC – was formed a few years ago and it competes in the Banbury & District Lord Jersey League. I will leave it to the club's manager - Matt Todd - to update the meeting further with regard to the club's progress and future plans. I would like to wish Matt, the club and the players every success for next season.

DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLORS

I will say thank you very much to our county councillor - Calum Miller – and our district councillors – Julian Nedelcu and Gemma Coton for their help, advice and involvement with some of our parish issues during the last twelve months.

M.O.D.

There are always a few occasions during the year when village issues arise that need the input and / or action from the M.O.D. It is necessary for the parish council to be able to make contact with the M.O.D. to try and get such issues resolved. I am therefore very thankful to both Kevin Jessop and Jane Todd for their continued help and assistance

AVHMC & ACA

In closing it is only right to make special mention of the ladies who volunteer to make up the AVHMC and the ACA. Without those ladies there would be no-one to manage the running of the village hall, community organisations or community events. I am certainly very well aware of how much effort and commitment that has been, and continues to be, put in on behalf of our parish by both of those groups. Yet again, I would suspect that the majority of our parishioners will be totally unaware of the amount of hard work that gets done in the background and behind the scenes so, on behalf of the parish council and everyone else in our village, I would like to say a personal thank you to all of them for their continued efforts and commitment.

Thank you very much.

Paul Wilson
Chairman
Arccott Parish Council
7th May 2024